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The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL

OF THE

FATHERHOOD OF GOD

BEING THE ELLIOTT LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PITTSBURGH, PA. 1924

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TO

THE MEMORY

OF

MY FATHER

Preface

One of the most insistent needs of the present in the Church is to distinguish between the essentials and the non-essentials of the Christian faith. The essentials, that which constitutes the very substance or *esse* of the faith, are the religious or spiritual convictions by which the Christian Church lives, and in which is the very life of the Spirit. These are permanent and abiding, constituting "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (not "to theologians" nor "to ecclesiastics"). The non-essentials, important it may be for the well-being or *bene esse* of the faith in any particular age, but not of its very essence or substance, are the intellectual or theological interpretations of these convictions which vary from age

to age with the changing and advancing thought-forms of the Christian centuries.

To rethink and rediscover the essential basal Christian convictions back of the traditional intellectual or theological formulations, with a view to their subsequent restatement or reinterpretation in terms which are vital and meaningful for the living thought of to-day, is the aim of the following lectures which I had the honour and privilege to deliver in the spring of this year in the Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, under the Elliott Foundation, and which are now published in accordance with the usual custom of that Lectureship.

Lecture VI. was delivered as a Sermon in one of the Pittsburgh churches on the Sunday morning following the delivery of the other lectures in the Seminary. This explains its briefer sermonic character.

J. M. SHAW.

Presbyterian College,
Halifax, N.S.,
1924.

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So essential and constitutive that, according to Apostolic representation,

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(*a*) Our justification or forgiveness.

(*b*) Our sanctification or inner renewal.

(*c*) Our future embodied immortality.

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So the Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God the sole hope of world-brotherhood and peace.

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THE GOSPEL OF THE FATHERHOOD; OR, WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CALLING GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?

LECTURE I

THE GOSPEL OF THE FATHERHOOD

I

THE conception or idea most basally determinative of all a man's religious thinking is his conception or idea of God. Who or what is God? This is the deepest question that any human being can ever ask, and the answer to it determines ultimately the whole thought and life not only of the individual, but also of societies and nations. As Hegel, the German philosopher, put it in a great saying in his *Philosophy of Religion*: "A nation which has a false or bad conception of God has also a bad state, bad government, and bad laws."

Now the distinctive Christian conception of God, the conception of God which we have through Jesus Christ, is summed up and expressed in the words, "Our

Heavenly Father," "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven." Not that Jesus was the first to apply the name "Father" to God. Some recent writers have indeed contended that there is nothing specifically new in Jesus' revelation of God as Father, and that all the elements found in His teaching were anticipated in Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic literature and in ethnic religious thought.[1] And it is no doubt true that adumbrations at least of the properly Christian view of God must be recognized in pre-Christian thought, both Jewish and

[1] Foakes-Jackson and Lake, *e.g.*, in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Part I., make this statement: "The Fatherhood of God is a characteristically Jewish doctrine, found in equal abundance in the Old Testament and in Rabbinic literature. . . . Until controversy with polytheism began, there is no sign that Christianity ever claimed to be a new message as to the nature of God. The God of Jesus and of His disciples is identical with the God of the Jews: His message was not the announcement that God is a Father or King—that was assumed as part of the common belief of Israel—it was rather instruction as to the kind of conduct required from the children and subjects of God, and the future in store for the obedient and disobedient" (p. 401 f.). Cf. McGiffert in *The God of the Early Christians*, p. 13 ff.

Gentile. As that great Old Testament scholar and teacher, A. B. Davidson, used to say: "God's revelations are never sudden or abrupt. Skirmishers and outposts always precede the array of the Lord of hosts."

Already in the Old Testament, for example, we have foregleams or forediscernings of the Christian view, for there we find the name "Father" time and again applied to God by the leaders of Israel's religious thought and life. "Blessed be thou, O Lord, the God of Israel, our father" (1 Chron. xxix. 10). "Thou, O Lord, art our father; our redeemer from everlasting is thy name" (Isa. lxiii. 16). "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isa. lxiv. 8). "If I then be a father, where is mine honour?" (Mal. i. 6). Though, when so used, and as often as so used in Old Testament thought, the term is applied rather to God's relation to the nation as a whole, to Israel as a

people (or to the King as representing the nation or people), not to the individual Israelite and certainly not to individuals outside Israel. As such the term "Father" has reference to God's Kingship, to His sovereignty and majesty, rather than to the intimate tender relationship connoted for us now by the thought of the Fatherhood of God. The emphasis in the Old Testament idea of God was upon His sovereignty or Lordship; and in this connexion it has been observed as significant[1] that even in the Book of Psalms, which best expresses the sense of personal relationship to and communion with the Divine, the name "Father" as applied to God is absent, except in one passing figure or metaphor in Psalm ciii.: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (ver. 13). In later Judaism, indeed, there are some indications of an advance towards the Christian view. The deepening and individualizing of religion,

[1] D. S. Cairns, *Christianity in the Modern World*, p. 42

which began with the Exile, had led to the incipient divining, for we can hardly call it more, that God's Fatherhood extended not only to the nation but to the individual—though even then in general only to the individual within the nation of Israel. But the dominant tendency of Judaism was very different, and what the Old Testament revelation of God had issued in in Jesus' time we know from Jewish apocalyptic literature. God in contemporary Jewish thought had become an abstract transcendent Being, dwelling in His sovereign majesty apart from the world, so far removed indeed from direct contact with the world and men that the chasm or gulf had to be filled up with intermediate agencies so as to bring the two together. A sense of distance and remoteness thus attached to the current Jewish conceptions of God.

In extra-Biblical ethnic or "pagan" religions, too, both Eastern and Western, we have adumbrations at least of the

idea of the Fatherhood of God. In Greek and Roman literature, for example, from the time of Homer onwards, we find Zeus called "the great Father," "the all-Father," "the Father of gods and men." And in Brahmanic and Hindu literature, in the Vedas, *e.g.*, we find God described as Father, "Father of all things animate and inanimate." But as so used in ethnic thought the term seems to have been little more than a vivid figure for Creatorship or Originatorship, rather than as signifying the close relationship between God and man which lay at the root of Jesus' conception. So we find Plato, *e.g.* in the *Timæus*, speaking of "the Father and Maker of the universe" —a usage continued even into later Alexandrian Christian thought, where we find the idea of Fatherhood tending to be identified with that of Creatorship as, *e.g.*, in Philo and notably in 1 Clement, who speaks of "the Creator and Father of the ages" (xxxv. 3), and of the "Father and framer of the entire universe" (xix. 2).

Foregleams, forediscernings, adumbrations or anticipations of Jesus' revelation of God as Father we must thus certainly recognize in pre-Christian and extra-Christian thought, both Jewish and ethnic. But what is new and distinctive in Jesus' view of the Fatherhood of God is that, according to Jesus' teaching and revelation, Fatherhood is not merely one quality or attribute of God among others—"Creator," "Governor," "King," "Judge," "Father"; it is the central determining attribute in whose service all other attributes of Godhead are exercised. "God is Love." God = Father-love. In that equation we have the specifically Christian view of God summed up and expressed. That is to say, Love, Father-love, the outgoing, self-imparting, self-communicating affection—the going out of the Divine Father-heart after those made in His own image as His children, seeking to impart or communicate Himself and all good to them, and seeking in turn to possess them for His own in

spiritual fellowship and service—this is the central essence of Godhead as Jesus has revealed it to us, revealed it to us not simply in His teaching but above all in His life and practice, so that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." All other attributes are relative in their exercise to this central essential or absolute attribute; all are—

> "but ministers of Love
> And feed His sacred flame."

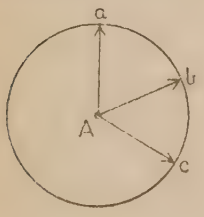
This is the significance of the old theological distinction between the "absolute" and the "relative" attributes of Godhead. On the Christian view of God the "absolute" attributes of God are two—Holiness and Love; or, as we ourselves prefer to put it, they are the two in one, namely, Holy Father-love. All other attributes, like His knowledge, power, justice, etc., His "omniscience," "omnipotence," "omnipresence," are "relative" attributes; that is to say, they are exercised relatively to or for the sake of the ends of the absolute

attribute or central essence, namely, Father-love.[1]

[1] It would be better, less confusing, we think, to speak of "essence" and "attributes," than of "absolute" and "relative" attributes. We sometimes express the difference between the properly and distinctively Christian view of the Fatherhood of God and pre-Christian or extra-Christian views as the difference between what may be called a linear representation of the attributes of Godhead and a circular or concentric representation. Take, for example, the Westminster Shorter Catechism answer to the question, "What is God?" It runs thus: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth" (Ans. 4). Such an answer suggests that the different attributes are all on a level, all in one line, thus:

A B C D E F G

It is an answer determined by pre-Christian and sub-Christian influences — the influences of Jewish pre-Christian views of God on the one hand, and of Greek philosophy on the other—rather than by the distinctively Christian revelation which we have through Jesus Christ. It does not maintain the properly New Testament emphasis or perspective. Rather the representation, to be true to the Christian revelation, should be circular or concentric, with Father-love at the centre and all other attributes radiating circumferential manifestations, thus:



A = Holy Father-love, the central determining essence.
a = Wisdom or Knowledge.
b = Power.
c = Justice, etc.

II

The central determinative character of the thought of Fatherhood in the Christian conception of God will be best realized by developing or unfolding it in the three great relationships which together cover the sphere of all God's working or activity, namely, the relationships of *Creation*, *Providence*, and *Redemption*.

First, In relation to *Creation*.

One of the great elemental questions of the human mind in all ages is this: How explain the existence of a world at all? What is the meaning or purpose of this universe of men and things in which we find ourselves? How did it come into existence at the first? To this elemental question the different answers that have been given down the ages outside of the specifically Christian answer may be summed up under these two. Either, on the one hand, the existence of the world, the coming into being of the world, was represented, as in

Brahmanic and Hindu thought, as a kind of necessary efflux or "emanation" from the Divine essence or substance — involuntary or at least inevitable, something that had to be, that could not but be. Or, where that was not the answer, then the universe was represented as made out of something independent of God that either existed eternally or came spontaneously into being, something that as independent of God continually limited and restricted His purposes — the dualistic conception of Greek philosophy. In either case the existence of the world is represented as a necessary and purely natural process, the outcome of natural non-moral necessity, not the outcome of any free-willed voluntary action.

As against both these kinds or types of answer, the Christian view is that the creation of the world was due to the self-imparting, self-communicating love of God which is the essence of Fatherhood, the outcome of the desire of God as Father to possess beings akin to Himself,

made in His own image as His children, and capable of fellowship with Himself, to whom He could communicate Himself and His fatherly purposes. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i. 1), the scriptural way of expressing the totality of existing things. The very opening words of the Bible thus assert the absolute dependence of the universe, of all that is, on God. They take us away back and up to the thought of God conceiving the idea of making a world at all. And in the verses that follow this opening statement, the different steps or stages in God's creating evolutionary process are represented—represented not in scientific terms, for the Bible is not concerned with science, but in properly religious, poetic, figurative terms in the form of a picture or parable. It is the picture of a man going forth to his daily work in the morning, completing a certain self-allotted task before night, reviewing his work at the end of each day; this for a week of "days," until at the

end comes the rest of the seventh day, the Sabbath, with its happy retrospect over the week's accomplishment.[1] Now just as among ourselves every orderly developing creative process must have an end or aim, a τέλος, which explains and is a sufficient reason for beginning the process at the first and for carrying it on through its different stages — the great last for which the first was made—so it must have been with God. And when we ask Scripture what this final end or aim was, which explained and justified the whole, the answer is given in these words : " Let us make man in our image, after our likeness " (Gen. i. 26). That is to say, let us make a being akin to ourselves, with reason and affections and will, with whom we can enter into intelligent rational fellowship, and who by the exercise of the gift of intelligent free-will can enter into rational free-willed fellowship with us.

[1] On the significance of the Genesis account of Creation a particularly helpful statement will be found in Griffith-Jones, *The Ascent through Christ*, Bk. i. chap. i.

This is the Scripture answer to the question as to Creation and the purpose of making a world at all. It exists, it tell us, for the sake of the Father-Son relationship. Love, Father-love, is "Creation's final law."

Second, In relation to *Providence*.

Not only the fact or existence of the world, but the nature or character of the world in which we find ourselves—what Butler called "the mixed condition of things," the mixture of good and evil in the world, the presence in it of so much sin and suffering as well as of happiness and good—this has been in all ages one of the great problems or perplexities in the way of belief in a Fatherly providence at the heart of things. How reconcile the world's sin and suffering with belief in a Heavenly Father, in particular with an Almighty Heavenly Father such as the Christian believes in? Never was this problem so pressing and insistent to so many minds as during the recent war years. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Such is the

first article of our Christian creed. But if God is our Heavenly Father and Almighty, if He is both all-good and all-powerful, why does He permit such things, or why does He not stop them ? Either it would seem He is unable or He is unwilling. If He is unable, He is not Almighty ; if He is able but unwilling, He is not all-good.

There were indeed those who attempted to solve the dilemma by denying the almightiness or omnipotence of God, while maintaining His Fatherly goodness or benevolence. Mr. H. G. Wells, for example,—to take the best-known representative in recent years of this mode of thinking,—in his *Mr. Britling sees it Through* and other war-time novels, maintained that the appalling catastrophe of the war, with all the suffering involved in it, and so much of it innocent suffering, was irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine of God, as Almighty Father-love. God may be good, loving, benevolent—he believed He was, the " Comrade God " —but He cannot, he said, be all-powerful.

He is willing but not able. So He was represented as a "finite struggling God," struggling with less or more success, often less rather than more, to make the world moral and good. "A finite God who struggles in His great and comprehensive way, as we struggle in our weak and silly way . . . that is the essence of all religion."

Now the root-error in all such attempts to call in question the omnipotence or almightiness of God because of the facts of evil in the world is a false conception of omnipotence—that conception which thinks of it in sub-Christian and non-moral terms as the bare abstract power to do anything, the omnipotence of mere caprice or arbitrary might. This, however, is to make omnipotence an absolute, not a relative, attribute of Godhead. Whereas if Fatherhood is the absolute attribute or central essence, and omnipotence but one of the relative attributes as it is in the Christian view, if God is centrally and essentially our Father, and such a Father as we know in Jesus Christ, holy and

loving and good—then His almightiness or omnipotence must be exercised always in accordance with Fatherly ends or purposes in ways which are consistent or, to use Leibniz's adjective, "compossible" with the ends of Fatherly wisdom and love.

This means that in a world in which God has, for moral purposes, for the sake of moral and spiritual personality in His children—which is the chief end of all His working in creation and providence—entrusted man with what Dante called the "dread gift" of free will, He has, in the very exercise of His omnipotent love, left room for the possibility of the introduction into His world, through man's misuse of this gift, of things altogether and absolutely contrary to His mind and will. Such a possibility is the necessary price of a world of moral and spiritual values. And it means, further, that once sin and misery have been thus introduced He can, in consistency with the same great ends, manifest His omnipotence or almighty sovereignty in

relation thereto, not by overriding or paralysing man's free-will and thus compelling man into submission by a kind of physical non-moral use of His power—that would be to destroy man's moral manhood and so to defeat the very end of the whole Divine working—but by overruling the evil in the way of so influencing man's reason and conscience and will as to lead him to self-determined change of mind and attitude thereto. Such a moral way of overcoming evil — by working through man's free will rather than over or against it—may take longer, must take longer, to achieve its end. "The mills of God grind slowly"—if God is a Father-God. But such a method of dealing with evil is surely a more wonderful evidence of Fatherly overruling sovereignty or control than would be the exercise of a mere abstract physical or metaphysical omnipotence.[1] The alternatives in the case,

[1] This, it is interesting to note, is the significance or connotation of the adjective for "Almighty" used of God the Father, both in the New Testament and in the Creeds. There are two Greek words signifying "al-

after all, when we think it out, are between a universe built on lines of freedom and a universe built on lines of determinism, between an evolving or growing universe (with all the possibilities or risks involved therein) and what William James has called "a block universe," [1] with its mechanical limitations and cramping conditions—in short, between a "thing" universe and a universe of persons. It is surely a greater, a more wonderful, manifestation of Divine Fatherly power to make beings that can make or unmake themselves, than to make beings that cannot. The former are men, and the latter are puppets, and, as it has been said, puppets after all are only things.[2]

mighty." One is παντοδύναμος, "almighty" in the sense of able to do anything, the abstract or absolute conception of omnipotence. The other is παντοκράτωρ, "all-ruling" or "all-governing," able to overrule all, even man's evil for the accomplishment of higher purposes. It is the latter term, not the former, that is used in the New Testament and in our Christian creeds to express the almightiness of God the Father.

[1] *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 310, 328.

[2] Cf. D. S. Cairns, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, pp. 204 ff.

The Fatherhood of God, then, the explanation first of Creation and second of Providence.

Third, It is the Fatherhood of God that explains *Redemption* itself.

The "Fact of Christ," in which the progressive redemptive revelation of God in Israel's history culminates—the fact of what is called the Incarnation, the coming not only into our human nature but into our human lot and our human experience, of One who was the Eternal Son of God, the Lord of Glory, and that incarnate experience issuing in the Cross and the Grave and then in the Resurrection and Exaltation to the right hand of God, with the virtue of His atoning life and death on earth in Him—how shall we explain a fact so extraordinary as that ?

Sometimes answers have been given to this question which do less than justice to the New Testament revelation of the Fatherhood of God. Sometimes it has been represented and is represented, for example, as if Christ came in between a

holy righteous God and sinful men so as to placate an offended alienated Deity and turn Him to a better mind towards men, with the suggestion at least that the source of our redemption was in Christ's willing and choosing so to do, and to suffer all that was involved in thus making atonement or propitiation. This, however, is a Jewish pre-Christian rather than a properly Christian representation—a re-presentation, or misrepresentation rather, which comes of making the thought of God as Moral Governor or Judge central and determinative for our thinking rather than the thought of God as Father.

It is not so that the New Testament represents the case. According to the New Testament, the fountain-source and spring of our redemption is in the heights of God the Father's planning and purposing. Christ's atoning work on earth did not create or originate the love of God to His sinful children ; it flowed from it. " *God* so loved," said Jesus Himself—" God the Father so loved that he gave."

Giving is the very language of love, and giving to the full length of the accomplishment of love's desire for its object.

> "Love seeketh not itself to please,
> Nor for itself hath any care;
> But for another gives its ease,
> And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

And the length of this giving of God the Father's love for redemptive ends with His children, the uttermost length of it, is seen in the Cross of Calvary. "Herein is love," says the Apostle—herein we see the very absolute of love, that beyond which even Divine love could not be conceived as going—"that God loved us and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He loved, God the Father loved, and therefore provided the Atonement.

III

The Fatherhood of God, then, the key at once to Creation, to Providence, and to Redemption. Such is the central determinative significance of the thought of Fatherhood in the Christian conception

of God and the world. It will be the task of subsequent lectures to draw out the implications of this view of God for the whole round of our Christian thought and life. Meanwhile, in closing this introductory lecture, let me indicate two practical conclusions of this Christian view of God as Father, by way of translating what have been up to this point largely facts of the mind into facts for the heart and life.

First, If God is our Father, our Heavenly Father, then He is interested in us *individually*, one by one. He has a personal interest in each one of His children. He is not concerned merely with world-movements or with humanity in the mass, as God tended to be represented in extra-Christian thought, too high and remote to be interested in or concerned with individuals. If He were centrally or essentially Governor or King such might be the case; at least we could have no guarantee that such might not be the case. To a God who was

essentially Power we might be insignificant unconsidered atoms, drifted along the great vortex of time and death. But inasmuch as He is centrally or essentially Father, and the essence of Fatherhood is individual care for His children, then, as St. Augustine said, "He loves us every one as though there were but one of us to love." Indeed if, as we have seen, the Fatherhood of God is at the root of all, if the world itself exists for the ends of the Father-child relationship, then God is more concerned with one individual life of His children than with all the world beside.

This is the conviction which came afterwards to be expressed in philosophical terminology thus: the sacredness, the infinite worth indeed of human personality, "never to be treated," as Kant put it, "merely as a means but always as an end"; a principle which, if applied in social and industrial and international relationships, would reconstruct the life of men and nations in terms of love and brotherhood. It is the conviction which

encourages us to come in prayer to the great God of an infinite majesty, the Creator and Sustainer of all, the Lord of heaven and earth, saying, "Our Father," "Our Father who art in heaven," and to spread out our needs before Him, knowing that nothing that concerns the child-life is indifferent to the Father-heart. It is the ground too, ultimately, of our faith in immortality, of our hope for the future as well as for the present, the belief in the conservation of that which is of infinite worth and value for a Father-God. "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that a single one of these little ones should be lost" (Matt. xviii. 14).

That first, and the *second* conclusion is this, which is but the obverse of the same thought: If the thought of Fatherhood thus establishes our claim as children on God individually, equally it establishes God's claim on us individually and one by one. The Father-child relationship is an indissoluble, inalienable relationship. A servant may quit his master's

service and be a servant no longer. A subject may remove himself from the sphere of subjection to his King or Sovereign and be a subject no longer. But a son cannot defiliate himself. He may quit his father's home and break his father's heart by wandering away, but even in his wandering he is still his father's child; "lost" indeed, to use Jesus' infinitely pathetic adjective as applied to those who have wandered away from a Father-God, lost to the Father's home and to the Father's fellowship but not to the Father's interest and love and concern.[1] This is the thought that Milton boldly expressed in the fourth book of his *Paradise Regained* when he put even into the mouth of Satan, a fallen angel, once a son of God, these words:

> "The son of God *I* also am, or was;
> And if I was, I am; relation stands."

God misses even one. This is the heart of the Christian Gospel of the Father-

[1] This is dealt with more fully in the closing lecture on "Fatherhood and Regeneration," especially p. 172 ff.

hood of God; the Gospel that makes its appeal to us individually not only for our own salvation but also for His service, for the realization of His Father-purposes towards all His children, according as Jesus taught us to pray, saying: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

LECTURE II

FATHERHOOD AND PRAYER; OR, CAN PRAYER COUNT IN A WORLD OF LAW?

LECTURE II

FATHERHOOD AND PRAYER

I

Belief in the efficacy of prayer depends in the last resort on prior belief in a controlling Fatherly Providence actively at work in the world, and free to operate in relation to the petitions and needs of His children. It was so the Scripture writers conceived the God who hears and answers prayer. The forces of nature and the energies of the world and life were viewed as a direct manifestation of His living working. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," said the Psalmist, in that great hymn of nature, Psalm civ. "O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty . . . who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: . . . who maketh the clouds his

chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind. . . . He watereth the hills from his chambers. . . . He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man" (vers. 1–3, 13 f.). It was so that Jesus Himself represented the case. Nature in all its processes, in its majesty and beauty and wonder, spoke to Him of God, the living God, His Heavenly Father; it was shot through with a Presence that "disturbed" Him "with the joy of elevated thoughts." He saw the Father feeding the birds. He saw Him clothing the grass of the field; and He encouraged men to commit themselves prayerfully and trustfully to this beneficent Father-worker with this great *à fortiori* argument: "Will he not much more clothe and care for you his children, O ye of little faith?" Even in the presence of the clouds and the darkness He traced the rainbow through the rain, and counselled men to faith in a Fatherly Providence without whom not even a sparrow falls to the ground, and who

makes all things work together if not for immediate happiness yet for ultimate good to those who love and fear Him.

To-day, however, in this scientific age, the idea of law, of "natural law," has got between us and the Father-Creator. God seems to be pushed away off and back, and tends to be thought of as the Divine Artificer who may have made this world at the start but now stands afar off, leaving the machine to run by its own laws. To use the figure of a recent writer, God is represented as "an engineer who started this locomotive of a world, pulled the throttle wide open, and then leaped from the cab, leaving the world to run its own unguided course ever since on the rails of law."[1] Men ask accordingly: In a world controlled by law, how can prayer count? What are man's petitions over against this vast system of law in the midst of which he finds himself? To expect God to help men and to change

[1] Quoted in H. E. Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer*, p. 94.

things in answer to our prayers is, it is said, unreasonable, even presumptuous, inasmuch as it is asking Him to interfere with the established order of the universe; asking in effect, as it has been put, carrying on the figure just quoted, "that the great through traffic of the world be sidetracked in order to give our local train right of way." And not only unreasonable and presumptuous, such a request is, in the very nature of things, it has been said, impossible of fulfilment. The realm of nature, it is argued, is a realm of law, fixed, rigid, inviolable. For God to answer prayer, therefore, and to make things happen in the world in answer to prayer, would, it is said, involve a miraculous intrusion into the established order, a "violation of law" as it is called, and such a thing is irreconcilable with our scientific conception of the universe. If prayer can operate in the world at all, it can operate only, as Professor Tyndall contended in the name of science in the great controversy on this subject waged

nearly fifty years ago, in the spiritual region, in the region of the mind and will and character, not in the realm of natural events or outward circumstances. The whole tendency of this way of thinking, it is evident, is to minimize or depreciate the place and power of prayer in the world. Prayer becomes conceived of as something mainly inward, or, as it is usually called, subjective, in its influence—if not in the sense that its only effect is the reflex or reflected influence on the man who prays, yet at most in the sense that we may only look to God for such inward answers to prayer as are obtainable through the opening of the mind and will to Divine guidance and enlightenment and strengthening. According to this view, the true and sufficient answer to prayer is expressed in those words of George Meredith: "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered."

This distinction or separation, however, between two realms in prayer, variously described as material and spiritual, ob-

jective and subjective, outward and inward, is, when examined, unwarranted and indefensible. The inner spiritual life, the realm of mind and character, is under law as well as the outer material world; so that if for God to answer prayer for a material benefit is an interference with the established order of material phenomena and its possibility accordingly denied as a violation of law, equally for God to answer prayer for a spiritual benefit must be described as an interference with the established order of spiritual phenomena, and its possibility likewise denied as also a violation of law. Further, the material and spiritual realms, the outward and inward, are so vitally interconnected that if God can operate in the spiritual sphere in answer to prayer His working in this sphere may have consequences in the other also; so that, in particular, prayer, for a material benefit, may be answered through an appropriate suggestion produced in the mental or spiritual world leading to subsequent changes in the world of outward

or material events. The truth is, that the theory which denies the possibility of changes in the outer world in answer to prayer strictly and logically carried out renders the possibility of changes in the inner life in answer to prayer equally incredible. Strictly and logically carried out, the view in question reduces prayer simply to the attitude of acquiescence or inward submission to God's will as expressed in the laws of His universe and in the circumstances of our life, with the inward effects such an attitude involves, in the way of calming the mind, steadying the will, and strengthening the heart. And if this is all, if these inward or subjective effects represent all the efficacy of prayer, then to pray for anything specific is out of the question; and it is but a short step to the conclusion that there is no necessity to suppose that God has anything directly to do with the matter at all, the results of prayer being only the mind's reaction on itself. Prayer, so far as it affects ourselves, becomes simply a

kind of auto-suggestion or self-hypnotism, and so far as it affects others it does so only by way of thought-transference or mental telepathy.

II

Now—not to dwell for the present on the fact that true prayer is more than petition, even the communion or fellowship of the child-spirit with its Heavenly Father, in which communion or fellowship petition for specific things is only one element, and further that our attitude in petition should ever be one of submission to the higher will and wisdom of a Heavenly Father: "Not my will but thine be done"—not to dwell for the present on these considerations, the view in question, with its minimizing of petitionary prayer, is based on a false conception of nature and of natural law, a conception which is now recognized to be both philosophically and scientifically obsolete. Indeed, as we draw close to examine it, we shall see that in this matter of prayer and its relation to law,

the saying of Bacon, the father of modern science, is true, that while "a little natural philosophy and the first entrance into it doth dispose the opinion to atheism . . . on the other side, much natural philosophy and wading deep into it will bring about men's mind to religion."

For, *first*, this system of law which we call nature, or the "natural order," is not a rigid, closed mechanical system, owing its origin at the first, it may be, to Divine creative power, but now a self-enclosed, self-running system bound together by the iron bands of natural law, in the way that the materialistic or semi-materialistic science of the latter half of the nineteenth century tended to represent. That is the conception of it which is at the root of speaking or thinking of God's action in relation to prayer as a miraculous intervention in or "violation" of the natural order, an intrusion from without into an orderly system which is now independent of Him. Rather it is, as

present-day scientific and philosophical thought is increasingly realizing and insisting, a living, moving, growing organism, existing only in a spiritual context and controlled and energized for spiritual ends.[1]

Science may, for its own purposes, abstract from this spiritual reference, and speak of the world as being "governed by law" or "under the reign of law," but this, it must be remembered, is not strictly exact or accurate thinking. Law of itself has no governing or controlling power. Law is not a being, or entity, an *ens*; it is not a self-acting force or thing. It is simply a formula descriptive of nature's observed method of behaviour or procedure, a term expressing the observed regularity or uniformity of nature's sequences. It tells us that, so far as man's observation has gone, certain phenomena do invariably follow other phenomena. As Huxley himself put it: "Law means simply a rule which we have

[1] Cf. L. P. Jacks' *A Living Universe*, especially pp. 41 ff., and pp. 117 ff.

always found to hold good, and which we expect always will hold good." [1]

What is meant by speaking of the "reign of law" or of the "uniformity of nature," therefore, is that the world is governed according to law, in the sense that the same cause is found to be invariably or uniformly followed by the same effect, the same antecedents by the same consequents. Properly conceived, and in more definitely Christian phraseology, the principle of the uniformity of nature is the expression of the stability of God's method of working in nature. It is the assertion that the ground-basis of God's government of the world is orderly, that it is by law, by "natural law," if you will. Such a ground-basis of law or order is not only the condition and assumption of science; it is the very condition of rational life itself. Without it life would be a chaos; no intelligent rational intercourse on our part with nature or with one an-

[1] *Collected Essays*, vol. i. p. 193, quoted in *Cambridge Theological Essays* (ed. Swete), p. 275.

other would be possible. We could not forecast results nor set about the accomplishment of orderly purposes in an intelligent way. The very condition of rational life, of intelligent intercourse with nature and with one another, is that the laws of nature are stable and uniform, that they can be relied upon, in the way of the same conditions always producing the same effects. The very order of the world, the "reign of law" or the "uniformity of nature" as it is called by scientists, is thus the substructure, the basal substructure, of a Heavenly Father's working, the fundamental condition of the development of intelligence and rational freedom in His children. As such, this system of law which we call the natural order is not a limitation or imprisonment, but a condition of freedom, the basal manifestation or fundamental expression of the working of a Fatherly Omnipotence for the sake of rational and spiritual ends with His children. In a word, it is the very "grammar of the love

of God," not the operation of an external mechanical necessity to be accepted with resignation or passive submission.

But, *second*, This system of law which we speak of as nature, is not all one homogeneous piece. There are different strata, different grades or levels in it, each subject to laws proper to its own order, and descriptive of its own distinctive or characteristic modes of behaviour or procedure. Three chief grades or levels in this system are usually distinguished, namely, First, the inorganic or inanimate, commonly called the mechanical physical order; Second, the organic or animate, commonly called the biological order; and Third, the conscious and self-conscious order, the order of intelligence and self-determining personality.[1] In this scale of orders or levels—in this "hierarchy of laws," to use a phrase of Boutroux's—each lower order is not a rigid closed or self-contained system, but is open to con-

[1] For our present purpose it is not necessary to distinguish between the conscious and self-conscious orders.

trol or modification, because utilization, by the order or orders above, the inorganic by the organic, and the inorganic and organic by the conscious and self-conscious. From the point of view of the lower order, the actions of the higher order may appear unnatural or " contrary to nature," a violation of or interference with natural law. From the point of view of the mechanical physical order, for example, the phenomena of organic nature, and much more the phenomena of self-conscious personality and will, may appear as if they contradicted the laws of the lower order. But as St. Augustine pointed out long ago, this means, not that they are really contrary to nature, but only " contrary to nature *so far as yet known* " at the lower level (*non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura*).[1] They would be contrary to nature only if the laws of the lower order were assumed to be final and ultimate for the whole system of nature, instead of being part of

[1] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 8.

a larger whole, means to ends beyond themselves. Nature is "uniform" or "regular," as we have seen, only in the sense that if the same conditions are fulfilled the same results will follow. If the conditions are changed, however, and new and higher forces are introduced with laws appropriate to themselves, whereby a new order or level of working is brought into existence, the laws of nature at the lower level are not violated or contradicted, but rather modified and transcended, their action being controlled and utilized for higher ends.

Of the fact that this whole system of law which we call nature with its different levels is not, either as a whole or in any of its parts, an iron system in which personality is imprisoned in the way the materialistic or semi-materialistic science of the past was apt to represent, but is rather the instrument and servant of personality, susceptible to the ends of personal life and controllable or directable accordingly—of this fact we have

first-hand knowledge in our own experience. As Carlyle observed in his *Sartor Resartus*, the fundamental evidence of this subjection of the system of nature to ends of personality is that I can freely stretch out my hand. The hand which I stretch out is as much a part of nature and as entirely subject to its laws, to the law of gravitation among others, as rocks or stones or trees. And yet I freely lift it up. The system of laws which we speak of as our bodies, that is to say, we utilize freely for personal ends. It is not that these laws are violated or contravened by being thus made the instrument of personal intelligence and will. So far from that, the very condition of our being able to use them as the instrument of our will is, as we have already indicated, that they are stable and uniform, that they can be depended upon, that they are inviolable indeed, in the sense that the same conditions invariably produce the same results. No, it is rather that the working of these laws is taken up and

controlled or utilized so as to fulfil the purposes of a higher and larger law.

This being so, nature or the natural order being thus subservient to the purposes of spirit, it follows, *third*, that the more we learn or discover of the laws of nature, the more controllable or susceptible nature becomes to the ends of personal will. In other words, the more we know of the laws of God's world, the freer we are to accomplish our purposes, not in spite of these laws, but through and by means of them. To illustrate. An ocean liner with hundreds of lives on board is in imminent peril in mid-Atlantic, rendered helpless and out of control by the angry storm. Once that liner must have been left to its own helplessness, or to the limited resources of its own provision. But through the discovery in recent days of more of the system of nature's laws, the mind of man has learned to manipulate natural forces in a new way, so that now appeal for help can be sent out by "wireless," across the dis-

tances, in answer to which appeal great ships change their courses and hurry to the place of danger. Each new law of nature becomes thus when discovered a new instrument of personality, an instrument for the development in new ways of helpful intercourse between persons, and as such a new possibility for man's causing things to happen in a world of law which apart from his action or intervention never would have happened.

Now, if man is thus able, and more and more able with his advancing knowledge of nature's laws, to co-ordinate and utilize these laws for ends of personal worth or value, what shall we say of God who knows all the laws of nature and in whose hand and leash are all the laws of the world for the realization of ends of moral and spiritual worth with His children? Who would be so rash as to attempt to set bounds to the possibilities of the working of Him who in His activities in the world is limited, not by any obstacles or hindrances outside of Him-

self, as man is, but only by such conditions as proceed from His own character as wise and holy Love, and whom, therefore, we call our Almighty Heavenly Father. Because Love, Father-Love, is over all, and because the world has been made for the fellowship of God with His children as its final end and aim, for "the revealing of the sons of God," to use Paul's phrase (Rom. viii. 19)—there is no place in His world where He may not be found responsive to the needs of His children. To His children's prayers He may respond through the co-ordination of the ordinary laws of nature which are the basal form of the working of His fatherly goodness and power; or, over and beyond those laws, He may exercise His fatherly Providence in accordance with other laws which are to us as yet unknown, and which, therefore, we call miraculous. But, however He does respond—and "no" is sometimes a truer Father's answer than "yes," because better and wiser for His children—the

point is, we can set no limits to the sphere of God's working in answer to prayer. The natural order is, as we have seen, not an independent entity outside the spiritual order, but the basis and substructure of this order; and God's working through prayer, even in relation to the natural order, is not a violation of law or a cutting across His orderly working in the world. Rather it is a controlling and co-ordinating of nature's laws for spiritual ends or values, those ends of moral and spiritual personality for which the universe was brought into existence at the first, and for the realization of which nature itself in its long process of ascending evolution cries out, groaning and travailing thereunto from the beginning until now (Rom. viii. 22). Nay more, inasmuch as the natural order rests on and is sustained by the spiritual order, with a view to the accomplishment of whose ends it exists, prayer so far from being a violation of nature and natural law, is truly its fulfilment, enabling it to

come to itself and realize its true destiny and consummation.

With the misconception of nature and of natural law referred to thus removed, there is no ground in reason for the denial of the efficacy of petitionary prayer, and in particular for the limitation of prayer to spiritual benefits in the way proposed. "Whatsoever ye desire"—such is the word of the great Expert and Authority in prayer, encouraging us to pray to God for all that concerns the true well-being of His children. And this word of Jesus Himself is increasingly supported by the most approved tendencies of present-day science. As witness, for example, the following striking testimony of Sir Oliver Lodge on this matter:

"Religious people seem to be losing some of their faith in prayer: they think it scientific not to pray in the sense of simple petition. They may be right: it may be the highest attitude never to ask for anything specific, only for acquiescence. If saints feel so, they are doubtless right;

but, so far as ordinary science has anything to say to the contrary, a more childlike attitude might turn out truer, more in accordance with the total scheme. . . . Prayer, we have been told, is a mighty engine of achievement; but we have ceased to believe it. Why should we be so incredulous? Even in medicine, for instance, it is not really absurd to suggest that drugs and no prayer may be almost as foolish as prayer and no drugs. . . . The whole truth may be completer and saner than the sectaries dream: more things may be—

> "wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of."[1]

III

Thus to remove the objection, however, is not in itself sufficient. This only opens the way for admitting the possibility of prayer. It remains now to show more positively the reasonableness of prayer, the rational necessity indeed of prayer in a world of law.

[1] *Man and the Universe*, pp. 43–44 (Methuen's Shilling Library).

That God, being the God He is, namely, our Heavenly Father, who has created the universe at the first and controls and governs it chiefly for moral and spiritual ends with His children, has provided in His universe of law a place for prayer, and further makes the bestowal of His blessings on ourselves and others dependent on prayer—this, when we consider it, so far from being arbitrary or strange, is in line with God's method everywhere. It is, indeed, itself a case of law. It is but one illustration or exemplification of a universal principle or law of God's working, a law or principle which may be stated thus: that God, being essentially and centrally Father, conditions the bestowal of His blessings on the co-operation or working along with Him of His children.

(*a*) It is so to begin with and primarily, in the case of the material blessings of life, the "gifts of nature," as we call them. God conditions the bestowal of these on man's co-operating or working

along with Him. The earth will not yield its fruit without man's labour or toil. It is God, indeed, who gives the increase. It is God's toil and God's energy which are chiefly involved in the producing of the harvest. We have read it stated somewhere as a scientific truth, that in the bringing about of a harvest of wheat, for example, ninety-five per cent. of the total energy involved represents the energy of God's working in the laws of His universe. Man's labour, in the ploughing, harrowing, sowing, and rolling of the soil represents only five per cent. of the total energy expended. But the point is, without man's working, even though it thus represent but five per cent. of the total, God cannot or, at least, will not ordinarily give the harvest increase.

(*b*) It is so also in the case of the higher blessings of truth—in the field of scientific discovery, for example. God conditions the bestowal of His gifts of truth and of the knowledge of the laws of His universe on man's co-operating or working along

with Him in the energetic use of his mind or intellect. He does not blazon His truth on the skies, so that man has only to open his eyes to see it. Only when men give themselves to intellectual labour and toil is God given a chance to bestow His blessings of truth on the world for our own and others' good. This is wherein consists the chief responsibility for each of us of the proper development of the talents wherewith we have been gifted—in this, namely, that if we fail to use them and develop them aright we not only do wrong to ourselves, but we do wrong even to God Himself by robbing Him of the opportunity of bestowing His gifts of truth upon us, not only for our own, but also for others' good. As Stradivari in George Eliot's poem is made to put it :

> "If my hand slacked,
> I should rob God, since he is fullest good,
> Leaving a blank behind, instead of violins.
> He could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins
> Without Antonio." [1]

[1] This is very suggestively worked out in H. E. Fosdick's *The Meaning of Prayer*, chap. iv.

(*c*) Now what is true in the case of the material blessings of life and in the case of the intellectual blessings is most of all true in the case of the highest blessings of all, namely, our moral and spiritual blessings. Here, too, here in particular, God conditions the bestowal of His gifts on man's co-operating or working along with Him in the way of prayer and child-like petition. Just as in the natural world unless men work, and as in the intellectual world unless men think, God cannot bestow His gifts; so in the moral and spiritual world unless men pray, God is not given the opportunity for the bestowal of His chiefest blessings on men.

And if we ask why this is so, why God thus conditions His highest blessings on prayer, the answer is that it is not because of any unwillingness or lack of willingness on His side to bless ourselves or others, as if through our entreaties we could increase that willingness. That is a pagan view of prayer, the view of prayer which Jesus was discouraging when

He said to His disciples, "Use not vain repetitions ('do not pray by idle rote,' Moffatt) as pagans do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. vi. 7)—as if through long entreating they could cajole God or turn Him to a better mind towards them. No, not that. Rather the necessity for prayer on our side comes of the greatness of God's Fatherly purposes for His children.

For a fundamental consideration in this matter of prayer, as indeed in the proper consideration of all God's ways with His children, is that God, being our Holy, Loving Father, is more concerned for His children's good than for their immediate pleasure, more concerned for their character than for their immediate comfort. If in the natural or material world God were to bestow His gifts of food and provision for man's bodily needs without man's having to work for them, where were the opportunity for the development even of the physical side of our being? If in the intellectual

world God were to bestow His gifts of truth, and of the knowledge of the laws which are waiting in His world to be taken advantage of, without our having to exercise our brains and think, where were the opportunity for the development of the intellectual side of our being? So if in the moral and spiritual world God were to bless ourselves and others without our praying, where were the room for the development of character—in particular, for the development of that child-like faith and dependence and surrender which, after all, is the fundamental or elemental condition of glorifying God and developing the spirit of sonship and doing true service to our fellow-men. Because this is God's chief end with His children, namely, to develop character and mould men into ever greater fitness to be the willing channels of His purposes, there are certain things which God cannot, or, at least, will not do without our asking. That is why Jesus said: "Your Heavenly Father knoweth what

things ye have need of . . . therefore ask him." It is not that prayer changes God's mind and will, or turns Him to greater willingness to bless us or others. Rather it is that prayer provides the conditions which give God the opportunity to realize His willingness, and to bestow His gifts and blessings in such a way as that when received they shall be used for His glory and for our own and others' good. As St. Thomas Aquinas put it long ago: "Our aim in praying is not that we may change God's appointment, but that we may procure by our prayers that which He has appointed." [1]

So then to the question, "Can prayer count in a world of law?" our reasoned reply is: Yes, prayer can and does count, just because the world in which we live is a world of law, and because Love, Father-Love, is "creation's final law." Because this is so, as Dora Greenwell says in one of her Essays: "Prayer is itself

[1] *Summa Theologiæ*, ii. 2. 83. 2, quoted in *Cambridge Theological Essays* (ed. Swete), p. 304.

one of these laws, upon whose working God has determined that a certain result shall follow :

> ' An element
> That comes and goes unseen, yet doth effect
> Rare issues by its operance.' " [1]

[1] *The Power of Prayer*, p. 34 (" Little Books on Religion " Series).

LECTURE III

FATHERHOOD AND THE INCARNATION; OR, WHY CALL JESUS GOD THE SON INCARNATE?

LECTURE III

FATHERHOOD AND THE INCARNATION

In our first lecture we saw that what is new and distinctive in Jesus' revelation of God as Father is that, according to Him, Fatherhood is not one attribute or quality of God among others, but the central controlling attribute, the absolute essence of Godhead, all other attributes being exercised relatively to the ends and purposes of Father-love. Of this Father-love, as we were considering in our second lecture, the government of the universe by law or order is the basal substructure, necessary to the very realization of rational and moral life in His children. And the place of prayer in such a world of law is but one manifestation or illustration of a universal principle of God the Father's working; the principle, namely,

that God, being essentially and centrally Father, conditions the bestowal of His blessings on the co-operation or working along with Him of His children.

Now this view of God and the universe, the assurance which we have through Jesus that Fatherhood is at the heart of the world, that in Browning's words "the all-great" is "the all-loving too," and that everything, even law itself, is so ordered as to further the ends of Father-love with His children, is connected with and ultimately dependent on the prior belief that in Jesus we have not merely one man more in human history, not even merely the summit spirit of humanity, but none other than the eternal Son of God become man, so that in Him, and in what may be called the comprehensive miracle of His human experience—His life and death and resurrection—we see revealed the very heart of God and know what God is like; according as He said Himself, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In the eighth chapter of

his Epistle to the Romans, a chapter which has been described as "a splendid fugue on the theme of the Fatherhood of God," [1] Paul's argument for a Fatherly Providence in life is an argument downward from God's redemptive revelation of Himself in His Son: "The God who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, surely he will give us everything besides" (ver. 32). What, we must now ask, is the basis or ground of such a view of Jesus, leading us to see in Him, in His life and death and resurrection, not only the highest revelation of God that has yet appeared in human history, but the highest that can ever appear, the final and absolute revelation of God, throwing its revealing light over all other lesser revelations of God in the world and man and history? Why call Jesus God the Son incarnate?

In attempting to answer this fundamental question of our Christian faith, let us approach our answer gradually, pro-

[1] W. Bousset, *Jesus* (Eng. tr.), p. 116.

ceeding from the outer to the inner, or according to the scientific maxim, "from the more known to the less known."

I

First and to begin with, for our present purpose we may assume that Jesus was a genuine historical figure who appeared at a certain point in the human series. Jesus of Nazareth was a fact of Jewish Roman history, his birth recorded in the census lists of the Roman Empire, and his death in the Roman judicial books.

Of the early life, indeed, of this historical figure, little is told us. In this the Gospel records are different from ordinary biographies. These usually dwell with considerable fulness on the early years of the characters they portray, finding in their early environment and upbringing a great part of the explanation of what they became in later years. But the writers of the Gospels dwell almost exclusively upon the story of the last three years of Jesus' life. Of the early years of

silent preparation for His great public three years' work, all that we know is practically summed up in the following facts. He was brought up in a labourer's home, the home of a carpenter, where He was the eldest child of the family. He had four brothers, and two or possibly three sisters. When eight days old He was presented in the Temple according to Jewish custom. When twelve years old, and about to come of age and in the letter of the Jewish law become a man, He, again according to Jewish custom, accompanied His parents for the first time to the ancient and holy capital Jerusalem, to the Feast of the Passover, the great national anniversary festival of the Jews. From that time onwards for eighteen years, from twelve to thirty, during which time, as the eldest son of the household, he followed the trade of His father and worked with hammer and saw as a carpenter in the village of Nazareth, making ploughs and yokes, as Justin Martyr tells us, for the people of the

village and the surrounding country districts, the chief support of His widowed mother—for these eighteen years all that we know of Him is contained in the comprehensive statement of the Gospel according to St. Luke, that " Jesus continued to increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man " (ii. 52). As we would put it to-day, He underwent a true human fourfold development, physical, intellectual, social, and religious. Until " when he came to be about thirty years of age," under the constraint of an inner divine compulsion, He came forth from His village seclusion to fulfil a three years' climactic work of self-forgetting service and sacrifice, teaching and preaching and healing, and paying at last for His loyalty to God and to truth by a shameful death on a gibbet.

Now of this man, Jesus of Nazareth, this genuine historical figure, and of His life and work as portrayed in the Gospels, it is admitted by all sober critics that two things at least can and must be said.

First, that He was a great religious teacher, the greatest, indeed, of all the world's religious teachers, the supreme expert on matters of God and the soul. About His utterances there was, we are told, at once an unspeakable charm or grace—"they marvelled," says one of the Gospel writers, "at the gracious words that came from his lips" (Luke iv. 22)—and an indescribable authority, an authority born of passionate conviction and certainty, so that charm and authority combined, people said, "never man spake like this man" (John vii. 46). About His teaching, too, as Romanes, the scientist, observed, there is a permanence and inexhaustibleness which is in striking contrast with that of other of the world's teachers, in that in its substance or essence it is never left behind by the world's progress in truth, but in each age manifests itself as ever new and fresh and inspiring.[1] That, first, that He was the greatest of religious teachers. And

[1] See his *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157.

second, and what is much more, that He was the greatest of religious livers; that He embodied His teaching as no other did in His life. "He went about doing good." "He pleased not himself." That is how those who knew Him best summed up their impression of His whole life—a life filled as no other with filial devotion to God and with brotherly love to man. Here, it is acknowledged on all sides, is the very ideal and pattern of what a human life should be, the ideal of manhood, yes, and, strange to say, of womanhood as well, combining as He did in perfect balance and proportion the gentleness and tenderness of the one with the strength and majesty and commanding leadership of the other. So that men everywhere are prepared to say with the poet: [1]

"If Jesus Christ be a man
And only a man I say
That of all mankind I will cleave to him
And to him will I cleave alway."

[1] Robert Watson Gilder.

Put Him in the series of the world's great religious teachers and leaders—Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, Zoroaster, Moses, Socrates, and the rest—and this at least we can say of Jesus, that He is the first and highest of the series. If we say, the others were divine, yet we must acknowledge, at any rate, a difference of degree between Him and others, that Jesus was more divine than they. There was more of the nature and character of God in Him. He was "farther ben" in the Divine life than they.

II

As we draw nearer, however, and take a closer look at this human figure, a deeper uniqueness begins to reveal itself — a uniqueness which, as we examine it, seems to make the difference between Him and others a difference not merely of degree, but of kind or class, so that we are forced to go beyond humanity to explain Him, and to render His personality consistent with itself. Not only is He

the first and highest of the series of religious teachers and leaders, He has really no second.

(*a*) This uniqueness is, in the *first* place, *a uniqueness* of *personal moral character*. This aspect of His uniqueness is commonly referred to as His "sinlessness," though this term is rather negative to indicate adequately the characteristic in question, suggesting, as it does, rather the absence of defect than the presence of positive moral qualities. The sinless perfection of the moral character of Jesus would be a more adequate description, only the term "the sinlessness of Jesus" has become through long usage so established in popular phraseology that it seems hypercritical to suggest its displacement.

Now this is a uniqueness, the uniqueness of His personal moral character, which, as presented in the Gospel records, rests on a threefold witness—the witness of Jesus Himself, the witness of His friends and the witness of His enemies. To take these in order and to dwell chiefly

on the first, namely, the witness or testimony of Jesus to Himself.

He claimed to stand in a sinful world the alone sinless One, perfect in His obedience to God and perfect in His love to His fellow-men. This was a claim made both positively and negatively; positively by what He said about Himself, and negatively, and even more impressively, by what He did not say about Himself. To take the former, the positive aspect, first. Searched on one occasion by curious and critical eyes, He issued to His accusers this confident challenge, "Which of you can convict me of sin?" (John viii. 46). If, as appears to be the case, this challenge had reference to His whole life and conduct, and not merely to one particular sin or fault of which He was accused at the time, it would hardly have been possible for Him to make a more distinct and explicit claim to moral perfection. As He said again, "I always do what pleases him" (John v. 29). And towards the close of

His earthly career, with the shadow of death already closing around Him, we find Him looking back on His life and work on earth and saying, "Father, I have glorified thee on earth by accomplishing (lit. 'perfecting') the work thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4). These and other sayings of Jesus that might be quoted, constituting the positive side of His witness to Himself, are indeed found for the most part in the Fourth Gospel, and so their value or work is discounted by those who claim that in the sayings of Jesus recorded in the Fourth Gospel it is often difficult to distinguish between genuine historicity and later interpretation.

But this objection cannot be brought against what we have called the negative and more impressive aspect of Jesus' own witness to His sinlessness, namely, the things about Himself which He did not say. For this side of the witness is as strong in the first three Gospels—the Synoptic Gospels—as in the Fourth, and

it is this: Jesus is never found making any confession of personal sin; no word of self-condemnation apparently escaped His lips, no cry of penitence or other evidence of ever suffering from a bad conscience. Keenly aware as He was of sin in others, nay more, deepening the sense of sin in others as He did by asserting the sinfulness of the inward thought or feeling or desire as well as of the outward word or act, and teaching His disciples to pray continually for personal forgiveness and cleansing, yet it would seem He never made any confession for Himself. He never heaved a sigh for pardon. Now consider the extraordinary significance of such a fact. Ordinarily, the more holy or saintly a man is, the nearer God he comes, the greater his sense of indwelling sin, and the deeper his penitence and contrition for His sinfulness. The more a man progresses in holiness, the more conscious he is of failure. As the hymn has it:

> "They who fain would serve Thee best
> Are conscious most of wrong within."

A lively and keen sense of sin, indeed, is a constant characteristic of the saints. "Faults," cries Carlyle, "the greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none!"[1] According to all human analogy, therefore, the note of contrition or penitence ought to have been more pronounced in Jesus than in others, seeing He surpassed all others in His sense of nearness to God. Yet on His lips was found no word of confession, no cry for pardon, and in His heart, it would seem, no sorrow for sin.

One recorded saying of His, indeed, is sometimes adduced as pointing to a different conclusion, the saying, namely, of Jesus to the young ruler who addressed Him as "Good Master (or Teacher)," "Why call me 'Good'? No one is good, no one but God" (Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19). To impugn or call in question the sinless character of Jesus on the basis of this saying, however, is to fail to realize the true significance of Jesus' words as a repudiation, not of

[1] *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Lecture II.

moral perfection, but of idle compliments. An acknowledged master of New Testament exegesis—the late Professor A. B. Bruce of Glasgow—thus explains the words:

"To the seeker after eternal life who accosted Him as '*Good* Master,' He addressed the sharp interrogation, 'Why callest thou me good?' as if to say, make not goodness a matter of compliment; call no man good till you know what goodness is, and whether the person to whom you apply the epithet deserves it. Yet, while virtually advising this inquirer to suspend his judgment as to the applicability of the epithet 'good' to Himself, Jesus, we note, invites him to immediate discipleship: 'Go, sell what thou hast, and come, follow me.' Had he complied with the invitation, he would gradually have learned the nature of true goodness, and that the Master he had chosen as his guide was indeed good." [1]

[1] *Apologetics* (3rd ed.), p. 340. H. R. Mackintosh (*Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 37) gives a somewhat different interpretation of Jesus' words, but equally one which removes the point of the objection.

So then, on this matter of the personal moral character of Jesus, the conclusion to which we seem driven is this: Here is One who is not only separate from sinners, but *distinct from the saints.* It is not a difference of degree in goodness between Him and other men; it is a difference of type or kind. His is a different order of humanity from others. He has no second. Such is the witness of Jesus Himself, according to the Records, as to His moral uniqueness among men.

And this witness of Jesus Himself as to His sinlessness is supported and corroborated by the witness not only of His friends, but also of His foes. With all their ingenuity of hate and malice, never once could His enemies prefer against Him any moral charge. One moral offence only could they lay to His account. They saw Him mingling freely with social outcasts, even going to their houses and their tables, and they exclaimed: "He welcomes sinners, and eats along with them" (Luke xv. 2). It was unwittingly a striking

testimony to their sense of His holiness and purity. So new and strange a thing did it seem to them that one himself apparently so pure should associate with sinners, that they suggested that for all his seeming holiness he must be a sinner at heart. So little did they understand as yet the meaning of Jesus' holy compassion and love.

There is one possible objection indeed to the admission of Jesus' sinlessness which has to be considered. The Gospel records, it may be said and has been said, are after all fragmentary. They are not so much biographies as collections of reminiscences and impressions, the *Memorabilia* of Jesus. They do not pretend to give a complete historical record of Jesus' life and words even as regards the last three years of His work and activity on earth. Besides, it is said, we do not know—His most intimate friends and companions did not know—all about His inner private life. So that we cannot fairly claim, it is contended, to possess the knowledge of

Jesus' personality sufficient to enable us to assert with full certainty that He may never have deflected in thought and feeling, if not in outward word and action, from the line of right and of perfect obedience to the will of God. Now the validity of this objection must be acknowledged, we think, at least to the extent of admitting that it is impossible to prove by mere historical proof that every word Jesus uttered, every deed He did, as well as every inward thought and feeling and desire He cherished, was free from any taint of sin. On mere historical grounds alone, we think it must be admitted, we cannot with complete certainty demonstrate or maintain the sinlessness of Jesus. To attain full and complete conviction even on this first aspect of His uniqueness, that of His personal moral character, we have to take another step and include in our consideration a second aspect of the uniqueness of the figure presented in the Gospel narratives, namely, the uniqueness, not merely of His own personal character

as a man, but also of His relation to other men, the uniqueness of His " vocation " or business among men.

(*b*) According to the Records, not only did Jesus claim to be sinless Himself, He claimed to be here *to save sinners.* He claimed to have come into the world, into human life and experience, to save men from sin both in its guilt and in its power, by bringing them into reconciled fellowship with God. Now this is a claim which only one could make who was himself sinless. One who was, however, little stained with sin was in the category of sinful men, and so far from being able to save others he himself, too, needed to be saved. This further aspect of the claim of Jesus, then, if substantiated, corroborates and carries with it necessarily and in the very nature of the case the truth of His prior claim to personal sinlessness ; and this we now proceed to examine.

This second aspect of Jesus' uniqueness, like the first, is variously presented in the Gospel records. For our present

purpose it may be considered under two heads.

First, there is the uniqueness of what He claimed to *bestow on* men, namely, forgiveness and new life with God. He claimed the right and the power not merely to declare God's forgiveness to men, as any prophet or preacher might do, but actually to bestow it as His own gift, and in His own right to absolve the sinner from the guilt of his sin. "The Son of man," He said, "has power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 6; Mark ii. 10; Luke v. 24); and when accused by the scribes and Pharisees of "talking blasphemy," for "who," they asked rightly, "can forgive sins, who but God alone?" (Mark ii. 7; Luke v. 21), He vindicated His claim by a striking manifestation of the power of God over nature working through Him for spiritual ends. So He stood in the midst of a sinful world and said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). Other religious prophets and teachers efface themselves before the truth they proclaim;

they are but the messengers of the truth, and do not obtrude their own personality between their message and men. But Jesus' message was Himself, He was His own Gospel. He knew "no more sacred task" apparently "than to point men to His own Person," [1] and the test question He put to them was not, "What think ye of my teaching?" or "What think ye of the truth I proclaim?" but, "What think ye of me?" Such was His "preoccupation with Himself," as it has been called, a preoccupation which is all the more striking when placed alongside of His claim to perfect humility. "I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matt. xi. 29). In any other, such a constant identification of Himself with His message from God to men would be classed as a species of blasphemous egotism, and is consistent with His humility only if the claim He made for Himself was true, and was of the very essence of His gospel for a world of sin.

[1] Herrmann, *Communion with God* (Eng. tr.), p. 93.

Second, and further, under this aspect of Jesus' unique relation to men, there was the uniqueness, not only of what He claimed to bestow on men, but of what He *demanded from men*, namely, the utter surrender and devotion to Himself of a man's whole soul and life. He pointed to the tenderest and most sacred of human relationships, and He claimed for Himself a prior allegiance. "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37). Nay more, He demanded the submission even of a man's conscience to Himself. "You have heard how the men of old were told . . . but I tell you" (Matt. v. 21 ff.). And, more wonderful still, He claimed to be the final arbiter and judge of men's destiny at the last; all are to be judged by their relation to Him, by their service or lack of service to Himself in the person of His "brethren" (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.). To be acknowledged by Him in the Day of Judgment will be final blessed-

ness ; to be disowned by Him will be final shame.

Now here, in this claim to moral and spiritual sovereignty over the lives of men, we are confronted with a moral problem of the gravest kind, a problem whose issue we cannot evade. Such a demand, with the claim referred to, goes far beyond the limits of what is permissible between one mere man and another, and must be dealt with in either of two ways. Either it must be rejected with moral indignation as the veriest blasphemy, and then Jesus was a deceiver and not even a good man ; or it must be acknowledged with humble reverence, and He who makes it be given that place of unique and central authority in human life and conscience which can belong only to One who is more than man and nothing less than essentially Divine. " Either Jesus was uniquely Divine or He was not even a good man " (*aut Deus aut non bonus homo*). So the old Fathers formulated the alternative. There is no escape, it seems to us, from this inexorable dilemma,

or, as we prefer to put it, from this inexorable trilemma: Either Jesus was a deceiver or was Himself deceived and deluded (and in either case how then explain Christian history and experience), or He was uniquely Divine, God the Son incarnate.

(*c*) And so all this prepares us for, and has its natural explanation in, the *third* and culminating aspect of the uniqueness of Jesus' figure as presented in the Gospel records, His claim, namely, to stand in a unique relation to God, to be indeed God the Son manifest in the flesh. In the light of the uniqueness alike of what He claimed to bestow on men and of what He demanded from men, so far from it being a surprise to us, it is rather a positive relief (is it not?) to find that Jesus Himself, according to the narratives, made this further claim to uniqueness, and placed Himself on the side of God over against men. This seems to be a postulate, to use scientific terminology, demanded by the facts, in the sense of being the only

hypothesis that will explain the facts. It relieves us of the intellectual and moral difficulty in which we found ourselves otherwise involved.

True, indeed, on this point of His unique Divine Sonship Jesus seems to have maintained a great measure of reticence or reserve. In the first three Gospels, those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus is never found calling Himself in so many words "the Son of God," though again and again He calls God His Father in a special sense, and claims a relation to Him quite different from that in which all other men stand to Him. In particular, there is that great saying, recorded both by Matthew and Luke, which is recognized as of undoubted authenticity: "All has been handed over to me by my Father: and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does any one know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22); a saying which, as Denney remarks, "tells us

plainly that Jesus is both to God and to man what no other can be." [1] Yet this reticence and reserve of Jesus Himself on this point, when we think of it, was not surprising; rather, it was altogether natural and intelligible. For the truth of Jesus' Sonship was a truth so new and extraordinary that, as has been well said, it was "not one that could be imposed as a dogma on the minds of the Twelve. It must be allowed to break gradually upon them as they followed Him from day to day. It could not be taught or told in formal doctrine; it must be divined by the insight of the heart. As they marked the progress of these sinless years, as they heard ever more clearly in His voice the tones of a higher world, as they beheld the strange and unexampled closeness of His intimacy with God, and felt its awe, impressions as to the secret of His being could not but arise in their minds; and these impressions it remained for Christ to guide

[1] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 272.

and shape into conclusions of a true and worthy kind." [1] "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also" (John viii. 19). "I and my Father are one" (ἕν, not εἷς, John x. 30). "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father" (ver. 38). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9; cf. xii. 45). These and other recorded sayings show that with all His reserve on the matter, Jesus deliberately sought to lead His disciples to think of Himself as the Son of God in a special and incomparable sense, even though they may not have been able at the time to grasp the full meaning of His words.

But even if these and other sayings of Jesus along this line had not been recorded, or even if most of them, as occurring in the Fourth Gospel only, be held to be later interpretations of Jesus' mind on the part of His followers rather than actual historical sayings of Jesus Himself—even

[1] H. R. Mackintosh in *Questions of Faith*, p. 50.

then the basis for our belief in the unique Divinity of Jesus would not thereby be removed or made unstable. For this reason. It is a scientific principle that the true nature of a cause becomes apparent only in its effects, and so the Divinity, or more accurately the Deity of Jesus, is truly realized only through the experience of His saving working in surrendered lives. As the Reformers put it, "to know Jesus truly is to know Him in His benefits" (*hoc est Christum cognoscere ejus beneficia cognoscere*). It was their experience of these benefits, of the moral and spiritual influence of Jesus in their lives, their finding that in Him the living God met them and touched them and made them new creatures—it was this, rather than any particular sayings or assertions of Jesus, that led the Apostles themselves, Jews though they were, with this as the fundamental article of their creed, "the Lord our God is one," to take Jesus out of the series of mere men and place Him within the Godhead and say, "God was

in Christ." [1] And these "benefits" or saving effects are borne ever-increasing witness to down the ages in the lives of those who commit themselves unto Him, so that Jesus proves Himself to be no mere fact of past history, but a super-historical figure, the living contemporary and Saviour of men in every age.

This experimental acquaintance with Jesus' power to save is, after all, the only really final and incontrovertible proof of His unique Divinity or Deity; so that in the last resort, as Herrmann of Marburg used to say, "we cannot prove the Divinity of Jesus to the unbeliever"—that is to say, to the man who refuses to commit himself to Him and put His claims to the test. As Paul put it, "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). This truth has received vivid and picturesque expression at the hands of Nathaniel

[1] As will be pointed out in Lecture V. (pp. 136 ff.), not till the Resurrection had thrown its revealing light back on the life and work of Jesus on earth did the Apostles truly realize this.

Hawthorne in the following passage in his work entitled *The Marble Faun* (or, *The Transformation*) (chap. xxxiii.):

"The friends left the church and, looking up from the exterior at the window which they had just been contemplating from within, nothing was visible but the merest outline of dusky shapes. Neither the individual likeness of saint, angel, nor Saviour, and far less the combined scheme and purport of the picture, could any wise be made out. That miracle of radiant art, thus viewed, was nothing better than an incomprehensible obscurity, without a gleam of beauty to induce the beholder to attempt unravelling it.

"All this, thought the sculptor, is a most forcible emblem of the different aspect of religious truth and sacred story, as viewed from the warm interior of belief, or from its cold and dreary outside. Christian faith is a grand cathedral with divinely pictured windows. Standing without, you see no glory, nor can possibly imagine any; standing within, every ray

of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendours."

Only from within can we truly know. That is a universal truth. It is so in the scientific realm. We must believe that the universe is rational if we are ever to read its secret. As the Schoolmen put it : *Credo ut intelligam*, " I believe in order that I may go on to understand." It is above all true in the region of the knowledge of persons. We must trust a man and commit ourselves to his self-revealing if we are truly to understand him. This is why Jesus' appeal to men ever was, " Follow me." " He who follows me will not walk in darkness, he will enjoy the light of life " (John viii. 12). He appealed to men first in the wonder and the uniqueness of His humanity ; but as they followed Him and kept company with Him they discovered that here was one in whose presence they found life become a new thing, reconstructed from the inmost centre outwards. They found that here was One who could do for them

what only One who was God could do, bringing into their lives peace with God and inner renewal, so that through Him all things became new; that, indeed, this man of Nazareth, the Son of man, as He was wont to call Himself, was also in very truth the Son of God. So it always is.

"The night was dark, and the shadows spread
As far as the eye could see;
I stretched my hand to a human Christ,
And he walked through the dark with me.

Out of the darkness at last we came,
Our feet on the dawn-warmed sod;
And I knew by the light in his wondrous eye
That I walked with the Son of God."

LECTURE IV

FATHERHOOD AND THE ATONEMENT; OR, WHY DID JESUS DIE?

LECTURE IV

FATHERHOOD AND THE ATONEMENT

The assurance of Divine Fatherhood as at the heart of the universe, so that everything exists and continues for the sake of Fatherly ends with His children, this, we have seen, is the new and distinctive revelation which we have through Jesus Christ. This assurance in turn depends, we saw, on the belief that in Jesus we have not merely one man more in history, but in a unique and incomparable sense the Son of God manifest in the flesh. The basis of this Christian view of Jesus, that He was none other than God the Son incarnate, so that in Him we see the very heart of God revealed, was the subject of our consideration in last lecture. From an examination of the unique humanity of the figure revealed in the Gospels and

of the effects of His working in human experience, we saw that the predication of unique divinity to Him is a postulate demanded by the facts, in the sense of being the only hypothesis that will explain the facts and resolve the intellectual and moral problems with which we are otherwise confronted. In the present lecture we proceed to consider the further question, Why did this Son of God incarnate die, and die such a death ?

I

The fact of Jesus' death is a fact recorded not only in sacred Scripture, but also in the pages of secular Roman history. The Roman historian Tacitus in his *Annals*, referring to what he calls the " sect " of the Christians in connexion with the burning of Rome in A.D. 64, makes this statement in regard to the founder of the sect :

" Christus was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa, in the reign of Tiberius " (xv. c. 45).

And this interesting historical reference of Tacitus apart, the death of Jesus is a fact on record in the Roman judicial books of the time.

Now, as thus recorded in Roman judicial history the death of Jesus is viewed as the death of a "criminal." That indeed is the very word the Roman historian uses—the death of one who died, not of old age nor of disease nor of accident, but of one who was put to death in the prime of life, and that the most cruel and shameful death of crucifixion, on the ostensible charge of being a traitor or rebel against the Roman Emperor. The real crime of which He was found guilty and condemned to death by the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities was that of blasphemy—claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God. "We have a Law" they cried at His trial, "and by our Law he is bound to die, because he has made himself out to be God's Son" (John xix. 7). This, however, not being a crime of which the Roman civil law could take cognizance, when Jesus was brought

before the Roman authorities for the necessary ratification of the death sentence passed on Him by the Jewish Court, the charge against Him was changed from one of blasphemy against God to that of sedition or treason against the Roman Emperor—the charge, namely, of claiming to be Himself a King, thus perverting the Jews against Roman authority and allegiance (John xix. 12; cf. Luke xxiii. 2). This latter charge, accordingly—the charge of being a traitor or rebel against the Roman Emperor and government—was the offence or accusation inscribed upon His cross, according to the custom of the time, that when a criminal was sentenced to be crucified his name and the accusation against him should be placarded above his head at his execution. "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews," such then was the superscription on Jesus' cross, intimating that He was put to death on the charge of treason, saying, as His enemies put it, that He was Himself a King. And it was written in the three chief

languages of the ancient world, Hebrew Greek, and Latin, so that all who passed by might be able to read and understand why this particular man met such a death.

That, then, is how the death of Jesus was regarded from the point of view of secular history, namely, as " a judicial execution," the execution or murder of one who was condemned to death as a malefactor or criminal against Roman law. We may say that His execution on such a charge was unjust and unscrupulous, " a judicial error," as we say ; that the charge against Him was not legally substantiated. Lawyers now acknowledge this. But unjust or not, that is how His death was viewed from the point of view of contemporary Roman history. It was represented and recorded, after the manner of the death of any other criminal in history, as a fate to which He came outside His own willing and His own control, a fate which from His own point of view and that of His friends and relatives was an unspeakable tragedy and disgrace.

II

But when we come to the New Testament and to sacred writ, how differently the death of Jesus is looked upon. Here, in the New Testament, in the Gospels and the Epistles, the death is viewed not as the death of a criminal, or not as an unfortunate fate or catastrophe to which Jesus was compelled by circumstances outside His own control, but as a fact whose significance and glory lay in its entirely voluntary self-chosen character. He laid down His life of Himself. Corporal Smith of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, throwing himself on the grenade that had slipped from the grasp of his comrade in the trench, and willingly and deliberately giving his own life that others might be saved. Or Captain Oates of the Scott Antarctic Expedition, going out into the Antarctic blizzard and walking of his own choice to his death, that so there might be a better chance for his companions, with their reduced fare and strength, to survive.

It is after this manner that the New Testament uniformly represents the death of Jesus. It is after this manner that Jesus Himself too, according to the Gospels, represented the case. "I lay down my life of my own accord," He is represented as saying, "no one takes it from me" (John x. 18). *Passus quia Ipse voluit.* He suffered because it was His will to suffer. If He had chosen to avoid the humiliation and anguish of the Cross He might have done so, such was His own representation. But according to Jesus Himself there was a great needs-be about His death, not an external necessity or outer compulsion as of circumstances outside of His control, but an inner constraint and compelling which led Him on free-willingly yet with a deep awe upon His spirit until it was accomplished. "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the high priests, and the scribes, and be killed" (Mark viii. 31); "the Son of man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified" (Luke xxiv.

7); "I have a baptism to undergo. How I am distressed (or pressed on every side, *συνέχομαι*) till it is all over" (Luke xii. 50).

At what stage in His life this consciousness of the necessity of His death for the accomplishment of the work He was here to do became clear to Him, we may not be able to say with any definiteness. Holman Hunt's famous picture entitled "The Shadow of the Cross" suggests that already in the Nazareth home this consciousness may have begun to dawn upon Him. The picture represents, it will be recalled, the interior of the carpenter's workshop in Nazareth, with Joseph and the lad Jesus at work. The lad pauses for a moment in his work, and, as he stretches himself in the doorway, the shadow of a cross is thrown by the sun on the wall behind. However this may be, we cannot read the Gospels with any degree of attention without observing how from an early stage in His public ministry the thought of His death was already present

to His mind as almost inevitably involved [1] in the course He chose to the accomplishment of God's purposes through Him, and how through the months and the years He moved on towards this consummation with steadfast determined tread and resolve, setting His face steadfastly to go to the end.

What was the nature of this inner constraint or compulsion which led Him on thus free-willingly, yet with a great deep awe upon His spirit, to the accomplishment of the work which culminated in His death ? This is the question which we have now more particularly to consider. And in attempting to answer it, let us proceed in properly scientific fashion, as we did in dealing with the question before

[1] We say "almost inevitably," so as to avoid a certain suggestion of fatalism which attaches to some ways of regarding Jesus' death as if this was the thing He had definitely before Him from the first ; as it is often put, "He came into the world to die." Rather the situation is that He had chosen the ideal of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah as His way of bringing in the Kingdom, and His understanding of history and of the course of events made Him foresee the practically inevitable issue of such a choice.

us in last lecture, from the outer to the inner, from the more known to the less known.

(*a*) *First*, and to begin with, this compulsion or constraint which led Jesus on was the compulsion or constraint of *love to man.*

His very presence in the world He represented as due to love. Of Him as of no other figure in human history it can be said, "He came into the world"—came of His own choice. He freely came into our place. He identified Himself with us so far as love enabled Him so to do, entering not merely into our human nature but into our human experience, sharing our burdens and carrying our sorrows. This is the inmost and essential meaning of the Incarnation —the Son of God, the Prince of Glory, coming not only into our human nature, but into our human lot, in a great act of loving self-identification with us for Love's purposes. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17). He took all the burdens of men upon Himself

in passionate sympathy and self-denying, self-sacrificing love—and took them in such a way that it meant something great and deep for Him in His own personal experience.

> "Quærens me, sedisti lassus
> Redemisti, crucem passus." [1]

The burdens of man's physical, mental, and moral needs—hunger, thirst, poverty, disease, anxiety, distress, perplexity, death—these burdens touched Him profoundly, coming upon His spirit with an inward pressure. But what touched Him most deeply was the burden of man's spiritual needs, the heavy crushing burden of man's sinful and, to use His own infinitely meaningful and pathetic adjective, "lost" condition—"lost" as the sheep is lost that has strayed from the shepherd's care, "lost" as the coin is lost to the housewife's service, "lost," above all, as the Son is lost to the Father's home and the Father's fellowship (Luke xv.). Even this heaviest and most crush-

[1] Verdi's *Requiem*.

ing burden under which men lay, Jesus, in His self-identifying love for man, took upon Himself. "He bore our sins" (1 Pet. ii. 24), and bore them not in any external official way, but in the deep, inward, moral and spiritual way of holy loving sympathy and brotherly compassion. It is told of Montaigne that on being invited to become Mayor of Bordeaux he consented, but with a reservation. "I am willing," he said, "to take the city's affairs on my hands, but not on my heart." Not so did Jesus bear our sin. He took them upon His very heart. In every sense and to every extent to which love could do so, He made even this burden of sin His own, in self-identifying sympathy and compassion realizing the crushing weight of man's sin and bearing on His own spirit the agony and burden of it. And it was this self-identifying love of Jesus for sinful men, and His being true to its constraint and leading even to the uttermost *in the situation into which He came*, that led to His suffering

and ultimately to His rejection and death.

(*b*) "In the situation into which He came," we say, for *second*, the constraint or compulsion which led ultimately to Jesus' death was a constraint or compulsion which, while prompted thus by brotherly compassion and self-identifying love with needy and sinful men, was also and further the expression or outcome of *obedience to the will of God, and the carrying out of the Father's purposes*. The love to men, indeed, which He was manifesting was, He represented, a love that had its fontal source or spring not first in Himself nor in His own planning, but in the Father's mind and heart. His very presence in the world, in human nature and in human experience, was, He said, the outcome, not first of His own, but of the Father's love-devising. "God (the Father) loved the world so dearly that he gave up his only Son" (John iii. 16). He came into the world, we have said, came as no other man has come, free-willingly; but He

came, as He said Himself, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John iv. 34). "What you hear me say is not my word, but the word of the Father who sent me" (John xiv. 24; cf. v. 23 f., 36, vii. 16 *et passim*). It was to reveal the Father and the Father's love to men that He was in the world, and to reveal this love, not in the abstract, but *in relation to the situation created by man's sin.* And in being true to this purpose of revealing the Holy Father's love, not only in His loving brotherly identification of Himself with sinful men, but in His filial identification of Himself with the Father's mind about sin, in condemning and witnessing against it, He met persecution, suffering, death. If He had been untrue to the Father and the Father's mind, He might have avoided the Cross. But He came, as He said, to bear witness to the truth; and because He would not compromise with moral evil or untruth, nor qualify

His testimony against it, He had to suffer and to die. Like the prophets before Him, He preached righteousness to an unrighteous world, and in doing so, in the circumstances in which He found Himself, He was counted by His fellow-countrymen a dangerous revolutionary in society, and in religion an innovator, and He had to pay the penalty with His life. He died as a faithful witness to God, and to truth and righteousness.

Now so regarded, and thus far regarded as the outcome at once of His love to men and of His faithfulness to God and God's purposes through Him, Jesus' death may be described as a *martyr-death*, one more martyr-death in history. He chose to die, even to die a death on a Cross—a death which stood for the uttermost of shame and disgrace and condemnation, the very name of which Cicero declares ought not to be mentioned in well-bred Roman society—rather than be untrue to the witness He felt Himself called to proclaim. So regarded, the death of Jesus is one of a

class comparable to the death of Socrates or of Stephen or of any other of the noble army of martyrs by whose courage and unselfish devotion to the highest interests the world's progress in truth and righteousness is determined. It is indeed the first and highest of the martyr series of deaths, the supreme illustration in human history of the law that in a world of sin the righteous must suffer for the guilty, the highest exemplification of the principle which even Plato, the pre-Christian Greek philosopher, already foresaw and formulated in these striking words in his *Republic*, that in an unjust world "the just or righteous man will be scourged, racked, bound, and at last, after suffering every kind of evil, be impaled (or crucified)" [1] (ii. 361).

(*c*) But, *third*, for the deepmost meaning of the death of Jesus and of the inner constraint or compulsion which led on to it, the Scripture writers at least go far

[1] "Crucified," the *Golden Treasury* translation; the other is Jowett's.

beyond this. They give it a place apart and unique, setting it in a category by itself. Not only is there a difference of degree between the death of Jesus and all other deaths, however noble, there is, according to their representation, a difference of kind or class. Not only is it the first and highest of a series, it has really no second.

In this way. By the New Testament writers the death of Jesus is represented as a death *for sin*, with an atoning or redeeming quality about it, which, it is claimed, can attach to no other death in history. As Mrs. Cecil Alexander put it in her well-known hymn, written expressly to represent to a child's mind the New Testament teaching as to the meaning of the Cross :

> " He died that we might be forgiven,
> He died to make us good."

The martyr's death is a death on behalf of truth and righteousness, and for truth and righteousness many may be called to die. But the death of Jesus, according

to the representation of the Apostles and the New Testament writers generally, was a death not only for righteousness but for sin; and for sin in the sense in which Jesus died for it according to the Scriptures only one can be called to suffer. "Christ himself died for sins, once for all, a just man for unjust men, that he might bring us near to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

This is not a view which, as is often represented, was due in the first place to Paul, and of which he was the inventor or author. For so it was, according to the Gospel records, that Jesus Himself represented the case. "The Lord Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins" (Gal. i. 4). "The man Christ Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). So says Paul. But says Jesus also: "The Son of man himself has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28); a saying which, however we may interpret the significance of the word "ransom"

(λύτρον), indicates that Jesus attached vicarious significance to His death, looking upon it as an offering or sacrifice for sin after the manner of the picture of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah in Isa. liii. (especially vers. 10–12)—a picture which there is little doubt Jesus had in His mind when He uttered the saying in question.[1]

So regarded, the death of Jesus is pointed to in the New Testament as not only the crowning manifestation of Jesus' own loving self-identification with men, but further, and what is much more striking, as the great demonstration or proof of the love of a holy Father-God to His sinful children. "God proves his love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners" (Rom. v. 8). "We know what love is"—the very absolute of love—

[1] Rashdall (*The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 30) holds that the saying about the ransom in Mark x. 45, Matt. xx. 28 is "a doctrinally coloured insertion." But this is, we think, improbable. This saying of Jesus does not stand alone. Cf. Mark xiv. 24 (Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 20), "my covenant-blood which is shed for many."

" by this, that he laid down his life for us " (1 John iii. 16). As the hymn has it :

> " Oh 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
> The love of *God* to me;
> It brought my Saviour from above
> To die on Calvary."

III

Now to represent the matter so, to say as the New Testament writers do, that the death of Jesus is the great demonstration or proof of God's love to a sinful world, at once challenges mental questioning. It raises an intellectual problem. For at once we are face to face with the question, How can the Scripture writers thus represent the death of Jesus as proving God's love to a sinful world ? They can do so, manifestly, only if in their view there be some necessary connexion or relation between the two, some objective need to meet which the death was undergone. The only suffering or sacrifice that can truly reveal or demonstrate love is that

which is necessarily involved in love's purposes. Otherwise the sacrifice is only arbitrary or gratuitous. The sacrifice of their lives by Corporal Smith or Captain Oates was an evidence or proof of their love and concern for their comrades only because the giving of their own lives seemed to be necessary to the saving of the lives of others in the situation in which they were placed. So also it must have been in Jesus' case. There must have been some objective necessity or need to meet which, on behalf of others, His death was undergone.

Now what this necessity was in Jesus' case, what the nature of it was, it may be difficult for us to define, but it is indicated in Scripture uniformly after this manner: *God being who He is and what He is, namely, the Holy Father in whom righteousness and the righteous order of the universe are "alive,"* [1] *He could forgive His sinful children only on such terms as should at once do right by His own holiness and ensure the*

[1] Dr. Dale's phrase. See *The Atonement*, Lecture IX.

holiness of those who were forgiven.[1] " Whom God put forward as the means of propitiation by his blood . . . to demonstrate his justice . . . showing that God is just himself and that he justifies man on the score of faith in Jesus " (Rom. iii. 25 f.). " This is how the love of God has appeared for us . . . in the sending of his Son to be the propitiation for our sins " (1 John iv. 9 f.). " In Christ God reconciled the world to himself instead of counting men's trespasses against them " (2 Cor. v. 19). " He had to resemble his brothers in every respect, in order to prove a merciful and faithful high priest in things divine, to expiate the sins of the people " (Heb. ii. 17). " Ransom," " propitiation," " expiation," " reconciliation "—that is the kind of expression used to represent the inmost meaning of the death of Jesus. The specific nature of the " propitiation,"

[1] Carnegie Simpson (*The Fact of Christ*, p. 147, 5th edition) expresses the objective need in somewhat more impersonal terms thus : " the doing right by the ethical order by which sin and its due desert are, to use Plato's phrase, ' riveted together '."

or " expiation," or " reconciliation " made by Jesus' " ransom " death—that indeed is variously expressed or represented in the New Testament writings. It is differently expressed in the Epistles of Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the Johannine writings. So that no one type of theory can claim the sole support of the New Testament. And it is worthy of notice in this connexion that the great Creeds of Christendom are content to affirm simply the vicarious character of Christ's death, " crucified for us," without defining or explicating in detail the *rationale* of the fact. But with all their variety of expression the New Testament writers agree in representing the case thus : that " Christ did for men in relation to God, and on the scale of the world's sin, something which man could not do for himself, and which did really and for ever change the moral situation as between God and man." [1] In short, Jesus, sinless as He was, the sinless Son of God, met death vicari-

[1] J. K. Mozley in *Fundamentals of the Faith*, p. 84.

ously—that is to say, not in His own right or because of His own sin or fault, but for the sake of the redemption of others.

To object to such a way of stating the case as being essentially immoral, as is often done, to say that it is contrary to our moral sense to suppose that one should suffer for another, the innocent for the guilty, so as to let that other off the due punishment of his sin—this is an objection which may be valid against certain formulations of this vicarious or "substitutionary" view, those, namely, which are of too legal or forensic a character (and the traditional Protestant view tends this way), but it is not valid against the properly New Testament view. If Jesus were but one man more in the race, one individual suffering for other individuals, the objection would have point. But if He be such a One as we saw in last chapter He claimed to be, and as the New Testament uniformly represents Him as being, namely, not one man more in the race, but the Son of God Himself become man and identifying

Himself with man for redemptive purposes, He in whom humanity itself was summed up and represented before God, the "recapitulation of humanity," to use Irenæus' phrase; One, therefore, who is not an outsider to any man, but stands in organic relation to all men in a way no mere individual can do—then the objection falls. For then the vicarious suffering and sacrifice of Jesus for sinful men is a case not of simple substitution in the legal or forensic sense, but rather of *identification*,[1] and is the outcome of His self-willed organic connexion with the human race. As Son of man, the "Second man," He could identify Himself, and did identify Himself, with sinful humanity in such a way as to say "Amen" from within humanity to the judgment of God on sin, and suffer all that that involved.

[1] This is the term which, to our mind, most adequately expresses and sums up at once the work of Christ for us on earth and the work of the risen living Christ in us. See on this point further, p. 147, where it is pointed out that the efficacy of Christ's atoning work for us depends on our identification of ourselves with Him in His risen, living working.

What this "all" was, the length of Jesus' suffering for the redemption of a sinful world, we may not be able to tell. We would require to be God Himself, or Christ Himself—to be, indeed, both God and man to know that. We are here in the upland regions where the great mists lie, if also where the great rivers spring. "It was wrought in darkness," said C. H. Spurgeon in a sermon on the darkness or eclipse of the sun of which we read in Matt. xxvii. 45 as coming over the face of the earth as Jesus hung on the Cross, "because its full meaning could not be beheld of finite mind." But the clearest look at what was involved in it we have in the experience of Jesus anticipated in Gethsemane and undergone on Calvary, the experience which wrung from Him the bitter cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). An experience like that, with the inexpressible inward shudder and shrinking involved in its anticipation leading to the agonizing entreaty, "My Father, if it is

possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39)—that, coming at the end of a life of holy fellowship and perfect filial obedience such as that of Jesus' was, makes us feel that here we are in the presence of something altogether different from a mere martyr-death.

As has often been pointed out, the contrast between a mere martyr's death and the death of Jesus is suggested very vividly by that passage in the end of Plato's *Phædo*, where, in describing the death of Socrates, particular reference is made to his fearless acceptance of the poison-cup without a sign of reluctance or dread. "With that," we read, "the jailor handed the cup to Socrates, who drank the poison quite readily and cheerfully without the least fear or change of colour or of feature." [1] How striking the difference in Jesus' case when the cup of death was put into His hands, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me." His

[1] *Phædo*, 117.

holy sensitive soul shrank from it with an agonizing terror or "deadly fear"—this, says Denney, is the meaning of *ἀγωνία* in Luke xxii. 44.[1] Now, if His death was but a martyr's death, are we not involved in saying that in the end He, the most fearless and heroic figure in history, showed less moral heroism than Socrates or Stephen or Edith Cavell or many another of the noble army of martyrs. We have a moral problem on our hands—a problem which, it seems to us, can be resolved only if with the Apostles we acknowledge that in Jesus' case there was something very much more than a mere martyr experience. And this very much more it would seem was this. It was the agony or anguish of the holy loving soul of Jesus in the last great concentrated grapple with the consequences of man's sin, in His work of making propitiation and reconciling us to God, realizing to the full the Divine reaction or judgment against sin, and going through an experience which was felt to be

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 273.

in some deep and real sense a forsakenness even by God Himself. In the words of M'Leod Campbell, the death of Jesus was " a death filled with the Divine judgment on sin," [1] the culminating experience of what was involved in His self-identification with sinful men for redemptive purposes. This was the cup before which He shrank, but which, when He came to see it was in the line of God's purposes, He drank to the bitterest drop, saying, " My Father, if (or since) this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done " (Matt. xxvi. 42).

" O love of God ! O sin of man !
In this dread act your strength is tried,
And victory remains with love :
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified ! "

Not that God was angry with Jesus, or that Jesus in thus bearing the sin of man was the object of the Father's wrath. That could not be. Never, we may well

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, 6th edition, p. 267. The words do not represent M'Leod Campbell's characteristic position or theory, but rather an advance beyond it to which, in closing his statement, he seems to feel compelled by a consideration of the facts.

believe, was the Son dearer to the Father than just at that moment, when in perfect filial obedience and in perfect surrender to the farthest reach of God's purpose and will for man's redemption, He drank the cup of God's judgment on sin to its last drop. Not that, but this rather: So utterly did He, the Son of God, who for us men and our salvation was made man, identify Himself with sinful humanity, that in the work of making atonement He was for our sakes "made sin" also, to use the boldest of all Paul's expressions (2 Cor. v. 21), accepting to the full the consequences of man's sin, even to the sense of separation from God's fellowship, which is sin's last judgment and most terrible sequel, thus "tasting death" for every man (Heb. ii. 9). This is an awful thing to say, the very essence of awfulness; but it is in this that the New Testament finds the measure at once of the sin of man and of the love of God that would redeem even at such a cost a world of sin. For this was a sense of forsaken-ness and dereliction

which He experienced, in some way which we cannot fully understand but which we can never dismiss, in order that it may never have to be ours. As Mrs. Browning has expressed it in moving and solemnizing words in her "Ode on Cowper's Grave":

"Yea *once* Immanuel's orphan'd cry His universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echo-less, 'My God, I am forsaken';
It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use those words of desolation."

It cost God that, it cost Christ that, to deal savingly with sinful men. And the only fit attitude on our part in relation to it is the attitude of adoring wonder and wholehearted surrender.

"Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

LECTURE V

FATHERHOOD AND THE RESURRECTION; OR, WHY WAS JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD?

LECTURE V

FATHERHOOD AND THE RESURRECTION

I

In the last lecture we were considering the death of Jesus and the redemptive significance of that fact for the realization of the Father's purposes for His sinful children. It is a death, we saw, unique and alone ; a death not merely for truth and righteousness but for sin, with an atoning quality about it which attaches to no other death in history.

The death of Jesus, however, is never represented in the New Testament as the end of Christ's redeeming work. So far from that, it is spoken of as only the beginning of it, as but the laying of the basis or foundation for a work that had to be carried on to full fruition and accomplishment. " In my former volume," says

Luke in the *Acts*, in beginning the second part of his history of Jesus' life and work, and looking back to the first volume, namely, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, in which He gave a summary account or impression of Jesus' work up to His death and resurrection—" in my former volume I treated all that Jesus began by doing and teaching down to the day when he was taken up to heaven " (i. 1 f.). Had Jesus' work terminated with His death, there should have been no such thing as a Christian Gospel or a Christian Church. There might have been memoirs of Him, as there are of Socrates and of others of the world's great teachers and leaders; there might possibly have been a school of thought founded on His teaching, but there should have been no living Christian faith, no New Testament Church.

Jesus had, indeed, spoken as no other had ever spoken, He had done many wonderful works—works " such as no one has ever done " (John xv. 24)—works which, as

Peter put it in the first Christian sermon as reported in the *Acts*, showed Him to be " a man accredited (or approved) by God " (ii. 22). And more than what He said and did was what He was, the unique impression of His life and personality whereby He made those who were closest to Him in the days of His flesh feel that they were face to face with One who was none other than the Great Promised One, the " Christ " or " Messiah," the " Holy One of God." Yet the faith thus called forth by the life of Jesus was a faith that broke into fragments under the crash of the Cross. Jesus had, indeed, foretold the fact and the necessity of His death, but His disciples understood not. Such utter foolishness did such a prediction seem to them that they paid no heed to it except to cast it from them as the veriest impossibility. And when the Death did take place, and such a death—a death on a cross or gibbet, which to the Jew was the very symbol not merely of human but of Divine rejection, and to the Gentile

was the very uttermost of shame and ignominy and disgrace—it quenched their hopes and shattered their faith. The Divine approval of Jesus on earth, as certified by His works, was apparently contradicted and finally denied by His death on the cross. "Our hope was that he would be the redeemer of Israel; but he is dead" (Luke xxiv. 21). The Cross and the Grave had made an end of that hope.

It was the Resurrection, viewed as a great declaratory act of God, the fact that, as Paul puts it, "God raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly sphere" (Eph. i. 20)—that is to say, in the place of Divine power and authority—it was this that re-established and reinterpreted the faith evoked by the Life, and proved Him to be indeed, the Cross notwithstanding, the Son of God. "Declared (or marked out as) Son of God with power," says Paul, "by the resurrection" (Rom. i. 4). Paul does not mean that Divine Sonship was an honour to which

for the first time Jesus came through the Resurrection. Rather what he emphasizes is, that the Resurrection only declared Him to be what He truly and inalienably was from the first by establishing Him in that dignity which answered to His nature.[1] Not until then did the disciples really know the true nature of Jesus. It was the Resurrection alone that truly convinced the disciples that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and that the death on the Cross, so far from being, as at first it seemed to be, a catastrophe or hopeless tragedy, and the final denial of His claims, was, as Jesus Himself had declared, a fact of nothing less than Divine significance—a fact in which God was for redemptive ends; and through this conviction sent them forth to preach a Gospel and to build up a Christian Church. So it is that, as a matter of history, it was the Resurrection, the belief that Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God, that was the fontal source or spring

[1] Cf. Denney in *Expos. Gk. Test.* on Rom. i. 4.

of the Apostolic Gospel. It was the Resurrection, supervening on and interpreting the Life and Death on earth, that brought the Christian Church into existence, and set it moving and energizing with that wonderful vitality and power which are before us in the New Testament.

Such, then, is the primary and basal or elemental significance of the resurrection of Jesus, what is usually called its "evidential significance," the fact, namely, that it was the Divine confirmation and attestation of the truth of Jesus' claims as to His person and work, and thus the fountain-spring and source of the Apostolic faith and Gospel. Thus it is—and the significance of this fact has to be noted, as it is often overlooked—that it is always *God* to whom the Apostles impute the raising of Jesus from the dead.[1] The resurrec-

[1] This is why the alternative title of this lecture reads, "Why was Jesus raised from the dead?" rather than, what might have seemed the more natural form of expression, "Why did Jesus rise from the dead?"

tion of Jesus was the act of God the Father, who by this gave His verdict concerning Jesus, thus once for all reversing Israel's act of rejection and refuting the Jews' charge of blasphemy. "They slew him by hanging him on a gibbet; but God raised him on the third day" (Acts x. 40): "Whom you crucified, him God raised from the dead" (iv. 10). This is the uniform Apostolic representation. So that Paul says: "If Christ did not rise . . . we are detected bearing false witness to *God* by affirming of him that he raised Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 14 f.).

II

But this primary evidential significance of the Resurrection does not exhaust the Apostolic view of its significance. Indeed, it does not bring us to the inmost heart of the matter. In the older mode of treatment of the Resurrection, in English theology especially, this is where the main stress was laid in explicating the

significance of the resurrection of Christ, namely, on its evidential value as the Divine attestation or proof of the truth of Jesus' claims as to His person and work. To place the chief emphasis, however, on this aspect of its significance, is to give the Resurrection too external and circumferential a character, as if it were but a mere sign or seal added on to the life and work of Jesus on earth to attest the truth of the claims then made; like a seal added on to a letter which can be detached without affecting the contents of the letter. Whereas, according to the invariable Apostolic representation, the resurrection of Jesus is not thus merely an external seal or evidential appendage, added on to the redemptive revelation of the life and work on earth by way of Divine attestation and guarantee of its efficacy. It is itself an essential and constitutive part of the redemptive revelation, a constituent factor in His redemptive work, necessary to its culmination or com-

pletion, and thus central and integral to His Divine saving work. For only through the Resurrection as His entrance on a state of exalted and glorified power did Jesus come into a position to apply or give effect to the redemption procured by His saving life and death on earth. As the old Scottish paraphrase has it :[1]

> " He who for men their surety stood,
> And pour'd on earth his precious blood,
> Pursues in heav'n his mighty plan,
> The Saviour and the friend of man.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> With boldness, therefore, at the throne,
> Let us make all our sorrows known ;
> And ask the aids of heav'nly pow'r
> To help us in the evil hour."

Without the Resurrection, that is to say, the atoning life and work of Jesus on earth would have been ineffective, it would have gone for nothing. Paul but represented the common Apostolic mind when, writing to the Corinthians, he said, " If Christ has not been raised, then is

[1] Paraphrase lviii.

our preaching vain (κενόν, there is nothing in it, it has no real content), and your faith is vain too (ματαία, it is futile, to no purpose, fruitless of effect). . . . You are still in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 17). It is through the Resurrection, as not merely the raising of Jesus from the dead, but through and beyond this as His entrance on a life of exalted power and glory with the redeeming virtue of His life and death in Him, that Christ entered fully on His career as Prince and Saviour, and became the life-giving principle of a new humanity, the "Second Man," to use Paul's term, a "life-giving" or "life-creating" Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45, πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν). Such is the epochal significance of the resurrection of Jesus. It opened a new chapter in the unfolding purpose of Divine redemption.

So it is that the resurrection of Jesus is not only, as a matter of history, the cause of the Church's coming into existence at the first; it is also the ground and basis of the Church's continuance in existence.

According to the Apostolic representation, Christian life and experience in all its forms depends upon the Resurrection. So that Paul's shorthand definition of the Christian life is this, life "in Christ," the ἐν Χριστῷ life, life in a risen, living Saviour. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most important single phrase in the whole New Testament. In Paul's letters alone, the phrase or its equivalents occurs over one hundred and sixty times. And the importance of the phrase for Apostolic thought is not to be estimated even thus arithmetically, by the number of times it is explicitly mentioned in its various forms. "In Christ," or "in Christ Jesus," that is to say, in the redemptive life-giving atmosphere of the presence and power of a crucified but now living, exalted Lord and Saviour—this is the keynote of all the Apostolic writings. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new (or fresh) creation (καινὴ κτίσις, a re-created personality)" (2 Cor. v. 17). The man who surrenders himself to the risen

Christ, and through this surrender or faith-union comes into vital identifying relationship with His saving working—that man crosses the great divide between a state of condemnation and one of salvation. So that, as has just been indicated, according to the Apostolic representation, Christian life and experience, in all its forms, the past, present, and future of the Christian salvation, depends upon the resurrection of Christ.

For, to particularize and amplify : [1]

(*a*) *First*, and to begin with, our very *justification*, the forgiveness of the past, depends upon it.

"He was delivered up for our trespasses," says Paul, "and raised that we might be justified" (Rom. iv. 25). This is often taken to mean, that according to the Apostle the resurrection of Jesus was necessary to our justification, in the sense

[1] The following points are dealt with in fuller detail by the present writer in his work on *The Resurrection of Christ* (T. & T. Clark), chap. viii.

of being the great proof that the sacrifice of Jesus' life and death on earth was accepted by God, thus evoking faith in us. "He was delivered up (to death)," so some explain the words, "because of our trespasses (to make atonement for us); and He was raised because (or to show that) we were justified by His death." But this is a very partial and inadequate representation of the Apostolic view, and in particular of the Pauline thought here and elsewhere. The resurrection of Jesus is necessary to our justification, not merely because of the difference it makes to us and to our belief as certifying the atoning efficacy of the death, and thus calling out faith on our side. It is necessary also because of the difference it makes to Jesus Himself. As the entrance of the crucified Jesus on a state of exalted power and glory, it marks the point at which His sovereign power as Lord becomes effective (cf. Rom. i. 4). Our justification, or forgiveness, the basis or ground for which

has been laid in the Death, becomes an accomplished fact and an effective reality only through Christ's rising again, with the virtue of His atoning life and death in Him, to apply His atonement in those who are united with Him through faith and personal surrender. That which justifies and saves is not Christ's atoning life and death apart from His risen living person and work, into union with whom and with which we are brought by faith. Nearly every error in what are called "theories of the Atonement" may be traced ultimately to separating the propitiatory or reconciling work of Christ in the past from Christ Himself as a living power in the present. Whereas the very ABC of Apostolic Christianity is that we are saved, not by believing in a fact of the past—the fact that Christ died for our sins—but by surrendering ourselves to, and thus coming into vital energizing union with a crucified but now risen, living, exalted Lord and Saviour. "In whom we enjoy

our redemption, the forgiveness of our trespasses, by the blood he shed" (Eph. i. 7; cf. Col. i. 14). "There is thus no doom now for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Justification is ours only as we are "in Christ," in such vital union with Him, that His life becomes identified with ours and ours with His.[1]

The Apostolic thought, accordingly, in the passage under consideration is this: "He was delivered up (to death) for, or on account of, our trespasses (that is to say, to make atonement for us); and He was raised for our justification (that is to say, that it might become an accomplished fact)." As J. H. Newman put it: "He died to purchase what He rose again to apply."[2] This is why the resurrection

[1] As indicated in the previous lecture, p. 123, "identification" is the word which, in the writer's judgment, best expresses the New Testament view of the essence of Christ's work for and in us, at once in His Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, and also of the conditions necessary on our side for appropriating this work.

[2] *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, p. 206.

rather than the death of Jesus is spoken of as the cause of our justification. It is doubtless true, as Denney urges, that "Paul did not make an abstract separation between Christ's death and His resurrection, as if the death and the Resurrection had different motives or served ends separable from each other." [1] Christ's work is one, and its end one. He both died and was raised for our justification. But this end was made effective only through the Resurrection. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead" (Rom. viii. 34). "Saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10). "If Christ did not rise, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17).

First, then, our very justification depends upon the resurrection of Jesus.

(*b*) *Second*, according to the Apostolic representation, our *sanctification* also, our moral and spiritual renewal or quickening

[1] *Expos. Gk. Test.* on Rom. xi. 23–25.

in the present, depends on the Resurrection.

This is but a further explication or drawing out of the point with which we have just been dealing. "In Christ," and through union with Him, we have pardon; "in Christ," and through union with Him, we have sanctification or renewal of life; for through His resurrection Jesus became "a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45), the source of spiritual quickening and inner re-creation for believers. Through union with the risen Christ by faith we are "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20) unto sin. "Grown into him (*σύμφυτοι*, lit. 'grown together into one with,' and thus spiritually assimilated to Christ [1]), by a death like his" (Rom. vi. 5); the old nature being "annulled" by our introduction into the "in Christ" environment, the environment of the power of the exalted victorious Lord. And we rise with Him and live with Him. "Grown

[1] Cf. J. Oswald Dykes, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, p. 155.

into him by a resurrection like his," "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live and move in the new sphere of life" (Rom. vi. 4 ff.). The resurrecting energy of God in raising Jesus from the dead, and in raising believers into newness of life when they were dead in trespasses and sins, is indeed—it is very significant to notice—represented by the Apostle as one and the same. The one is the prolongation of the other, the manifestation in two steps or stages of the same Divine wonder-working (as we would say to-day, supernatural) energy. "May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father," writes Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, "grant you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation for the knowledge of himself, so that you can understand . . . the surpassing greatness of his power over us believers—a power which operates with the strength of the might which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his

right hand in the heavenly sphere" (Eph. i. 17 ff.). As it has been put: "Every conversion, every advance in the new life, is part of that great new creation which began at the open grave, which advanced at Pentecost, and which will only reach its consummation when every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue confess that He is Lord!"[1] And the final issue and outcome of this new creating life-giving working of the risen Christ, Paul describes as "being transformed into the same likeness as Christ himself, passing from one glory to another —for this comes of the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

(*c*) *Third*, according to the Apostolic representation, not only justification and forgiveness for the past, and sanctification and quickening in the present, but, further, the Christian's hope of a full and blessed immortality in the future depends on the resurrection of Jesus.

[1] D. S. Cairns in *Christ and Human Need* (S.V.M.), p. 186.

This is so in two ways. First, as the final confirmation and assurance of the faith in immortality involved in the life of communion with God. Already in the Old Testament we see men wistfully laying hold of the faith in immortality as involved in the very nature of religion as life in fellowship with God. The man whom God in His love has called into communion with Himself must, it was felt, be His for ever. Only through Jesus and His resurrection, however, did this elemental religious faith or hope become an assured or certain fact. For His was a life lived, as no other life in human history, in unbroken fellowship with the Father. In Him, therefore, and in His experience in contact with death, we have the great test case, what science calls the "crucial instance" of death's reaction on a life lived in this relationship. So that in the resurrection of Jesus we have the final confirmation and guarantee of the faith in immortality

involved in the life of filial fellowship with God.

But, second, according to the teaching of the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus is not only thus the guarantee and confirmation of the faith in immortality involved in communion with God; it is also, through the vital union with a risen, living Christ and Saviour into which we are introduced through identifying faith and personal surrender, the very ground and generating principle of the full and blessed immortality for which the believer craves. And it is so, inasmuch as in it we have the basis not only of our moral and spiritual renewal here and now, but also of our bodily resurrection hereafter. "I am myself resurrection and life," said Jesus—"life," and therefore "resurrection"—"he who believes in me will live, even if he dies" (John xi. 25). "Because I live" (not "because I lived," but "because I live"), "ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). As Paul puts it, carrying on Christ's own thought, "as by man death

came, by man came also resurrection from the dead; as all die in Adam (all who belong to Adam's family), so shall all be made alive in Christ (all who belong to Christ)" (1 Cor. xv. 21 f.). In His resurrection Christ became "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. v. 45, πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν), the vitalizing principle of a new humanity. That is to say, Jesus in His resurrection is not only "the first-fruits" (ἀπαρχή, 1 Cor. xv. 20) from the dead, and as such the earnest and sample of the coming harvest, He is also the principle and potency, the ἀρχή (Col. i. 18) of the resurrection of those who believe in Him.

Already in the Apostolic age there were those who under the influence of non-Christian dualistic presuppositions declared that there was nothing more to hope for than a moral and spiritual resurrection, so that they asserted that for believers "the resurrection has taken place already" (2 Tim. ii. 18). And it is a common fashion to-day, under the influence of the

dualistic or semi-dualistic presuppositions of modern thought, to endeavour to confine the resurrection to the moral and spiritual side of our nature, and thus to exclude the physical—a kind of neo-Christian naturalism. But this is outwith Apostolic thought. "If Christ is within you," says Paul in his impressive argument in Rom. viii. 10 f., "though the body is a dead thing (consigned to physical dissolution) owing to Adam's sin, the spirit (the spirit of the believer) is living, as the result of righteousness." "And," he goes on, for the spiritual resurrection which has already taken place through the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer is not all, "and, if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells with you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies live by his indwelling Spirit in your lives." The indwelling Spirit, sometimes described by Paul as the Spirit of the risen Christ, "Christ in us," and sometimes as the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from

the dead — this indwelling Spirit is a regenerative principle or power for the whole personality, body as well as soul or spirit, leading not only to a moral and spiritual resurrection now, but to a bodily resurrection hereafter.

The body that is raised, the resurrection body of believers, is indeed not the identical material body of earth. The body of earth is a body of flesh and blood, and "flesh and blood," Paul says in his great resurrection chapter in 1 Corinthians, "cannot inherit the Kingdom (or Realm) of God, nor can the perishing inherit the imperishable" (xv. 50). That was the current Jewish Pharisaic view, which Paul in this chapter characterizes as a "foolish" (ver. 35), as we would say to-day, a scientifically absurd and impossible view—the view, namely, that the resurrection-body was simply the material body of earth revivified and resuscitated. Between the material body of earth and the resurrection-body there is indeed a continuity, but also a striking difference or contrast.

And to illustrate the difference or contrast he takes the analogy of the difference or contrast between the seed grown in the ground and the grain that springs up later. "What you sow," he says, "is not the body that is to be; it is a mere naked, undeveloped grain (γυμνὸν κόκκον) of wheat, *e.g.*, or some other seed. But God (ὁ δὲ Θέος, in contrast with σὺ ὃ σπείρεις in ver. 36) gives it a body according as He willed (καθὼς ἠθέλησεν)," "the aor. denoting the final act of God's will determining the constitution of nature"[1]—a body richer and fuller than that which was sown . . . "to each kind of seed a body of its own" (ἴδιον), a body peculiar to itself, the body best fitted to give effective expression to the life which possesses it (vers. 36 ff.). "So," Paul says, "with the resurrection of the dead" (ver. 42). As in the resourcefulness of God in nature the seed sown springs up in a strikingly different, fuller, and larger form of life, so by the working of the Spirit (πνεῦμα), the Spirit

[1] T. C. Edwards, *1 Corinthians*, p. 434.

of God or of the risen, living Christ, the believer becomes equipped with a "body" or organ of manifestation and expression (which is the essential meaning of the term "body") very different from that of earth — a body fitted to subserve the needs of a future super-terrestrial existence, as our present bodies subserve the needs of a material earthly existence.

Through the quickening influence of the Spirit, "the Spirit of the life which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 2), the body itself is thus brought within the sphere and power of immortality; the body of "corruption" giving place to a body of "incorruption," the "natural" or "animate" body (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*), the body appropriate to the present material conditions of earth giving place to a "spiritual body" (*σῶμα πνευματικόν*), a body appropriate to the more spiritual conditions of the after-life (1 Cor. xv. 42, 44). This quickening, indeed, is, it would seem, according to the teaching of the Apostle,

already begun here on earth. Through the indwelling of the Spirit of the risen Christ there is already going on in the believer a gradual inward transformation of the body (cf. 2 Cor. v. 5)—a transformation or metamorphosis which in its ideal manifestation and expression was exhibited in the transformation of Christ's "natural body" of earth into His risen "spiritual" body," without anything having to be left behind in the grave to undergo corruption [1]—and which in its final issue in the believer shall "transform the body of our humiliation till it resembles or becomes conformable to (*σύμμορφον*) the body of Christ's glory, by the same power that enables him to make everything subject to himself," or, as Weymouth translates it, "in the exercise of the power which he (the Lord Jesus Christ) has even to subject all things to himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

[1] On the significance of this *differentia* between the resurrection-body of Jesus and that of believers, see the present writer's *The Resurrection of Christ*, pp. 97 ff.

III

Thus it is that the Resurrection, not as a mere evidential confirmation of Jesus' life and work on earth, but as the entrance of the crucified and buried Jesus on a state of exalted power and glory in which He is Lord both in grace and in nature, becomes for the Apostles the fundamental determinative principle, not only of the whole round of Christian experience, but also of the whole Christian view of the world and life. For them all things — God, the world, and man — came to be viewed *sub specie Resurrectionis*, in the light of the Resurrection. Through the resurrection of Jesus as no merely spiritual resurrection, no mere survival of the spirit beyond death—and, after all, to speak of the resurrection of spirit is unmeaning, for spirit is not buried, so that, as Denney has said, "if we cannot speak of a bodily resurrection, we should not speak of resurrection at all"[1]—but as a being

[1] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 113.

raised from the power of death and the grave, God has in the great test case or crucial instance of history convincingly manifested the supremacy of spirit over the strongest material forces, and shown that the material order is rooted and grounded in moral and spiritual purposes. The long struggle between nature and spirit was concentrated climactically in the body of Jesus, and by His bodily resurrection from death and the grave victory is shown to remain with spirit. Death itself, the crowning manifestation of the seeming victory of material forces over spiritual, has been vanquished and overcome; and this supreme and crucial revelation of the power and character of God sheds its transfiguring light over all other revelation in nature and history, illuminating the mysteries of life here and of destiny hereafter.[1]

[1] Cf. D. S. Cairns's address on "The Risen Christ," in *Christ and Human Need* (S.V.M.), pp. 176–188—an address of great beauty and power.

By the Resurrection, that is to say, the final pledge and assurance of personal immortality is given to men; the present life in the fullness of its embodied existence is lifted above the vicissitudes of time and invested with infinite meaning and eternal value. "Wherefore," such is the conclusion of Paul's great argument in the Resurrection chapter in 1 Corinthians, "be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (xv. 58). In a word, the resurrection of Jesus was for the Apostolic mind the one fact in which the world and history arrived at unity, consistence, coherence; it was the pledge and guarantee of "the gathering up in Christ of all things in heaven and earth" (Eph. i. 10; cf. Col. i. 15 ff.). It was the breaking in upon human life of a new world of triumph and hope, in which were contained at once the earnest and the ground, the ἀπαρχή and the ἀρχή, of the consummation of God's redemptive purpose for the world. Hence

the vitalizing and energizing optimism of the Apostolic outlook on life, "born anew to a life of hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. i. 3).

LECTURE VI

FATHERHOOD AND REGENERATION; OR, HOW BECOME SONS OF GOD?

LECTURE VI

FATHERHOOD AND REGENERATION

"Ye must be born anew (or, from above)."—JOHN iii. 7.

"Except a man be born anew (or, from above), he cannot see the Kingdom of God."—JOHN iii. 3.

THESE words are not so often preached upon to-day as they used to be. There is an old-world ring about them. And yet I think we shall see, when we bring our minds close up to them, that no words can be more timely or up-to-date, and that the necessity here referred to, the necessity of "regeneration," is a necessity not only for our own individual salvation, but also for the bringing in of a new era of peace and brotherhood and goodwill in the world, what Scripture calls "the Kingdom of God" among men.

I

"Ye must be born anew," or as it is more literally and more properly, "from above" (ἄνωθεν). "Except a man be born anew, or from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." When we read or hear these words, our natural impulse is to ask, with Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb over again and be born?" (ver. 4). To this perfectly natural question Jesus replied in effect: There is a first birth, and there is a second birth. There is a natural birth, and there is a spiritual birth. The former is of the flesh, the latter is of the Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is Spirit. By the first or natural birth we are born children, children of God, born "in the image of God," to use the scriptural expression, in kinship with God Himself—that is to say, with reason, affections, and will, in a word, with the

power of intelligent freewilled choice, and the capacity through the proper use of this power to develop into God's likeness.

But childship is not in itself sonship. It is only the potentiality of sonship. Sonship is a development, something that comes to be through living in fellowship with God and in the environment of His fatherly love and purposes; as the child in the home of earth only develops into a true son of the house by abiding in the fellowship of the parents' love and care. Sonship, that is to say, is not born, but made. It is not a natural endowment, like childship; it is a spiritual achievement through progressive surrender to the love-purposes of a Father-God. If born, it is born not of flesh nor of blood, but "of the Spirit," the fruit of spiritual fellowship and intercourse with the Father through the exercise of intelligence and affection and free will. In other words, sonship means more than mere natural relationship or descent, it

means spiritual likeness or affinity, the sharing of a common spirit. "As many as are led (or guided) by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

Thus it is that we find Jesus time and again exhorting His disciples to become the sons of God, through increasingly sharing His spirit and manifesting His character. "Love your enemies," He said, for example, "and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 44 f.). And again, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God" (ver. 9). "Abraham is our father" (John viii. 39), said the scribes and the Pharisees in answer to Jesus' words of condemnation, yea more, "we have one Father, even God" (ver. 41). "No," said Jesus, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came here from God" (ver. 42). "You are

of your father the devil" (ver. 44). Your spirit and disposition show whose sons ye are. Sonship, that is to say, means more than descent or blood relationship; it means spiritual kinship or affinity.

II

Now in only one case in human history has Divine childship developed normally into true Divine sonship, namely, in the case of Jesus of Nazareth. Of Him alone could God say: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22: cf. Matt. xvii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 17).[1] In all others there has been an abnormality in the development. We all have failed, we the children of God by nature, to

[1] "The divine recognition at His baptism is a recognition not of what He was potentially by His birth, but of what He was, and had humanly become, in His life. God was well pleased with Him. That was no commendation of any mere fact of nature, human or divine. It was satisfaction with His human life, with what He had grown to be under all the conditions and circumstances of His earthly preparation" (Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, p. 45).

develop into true sonship, into the true filial relationship. We have taken up an unchildlike attitude. We have forsaken the Father and the Father's fellowship and are become, to use Jesus' own expressive and meaningful term, "lost" children, lost to the Father's home and the Father's care, though not to the Father's interest and yearning love. We have said by life, if not in so many words, "Who is the Lord, that we should serve him? Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us." We have misused the gift of free will with which we have been endowed above the other creatures of God's hands. So that God's complaint with us is as it was with His people Israel of old: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," the beasts of the field acknowledge their master, and obey his word of command, "but my people," children made in My image, for My fellowship and service, "have forsaken me . . . they are estranged and gone backward" (Isa. i. 3 f.). We

have gone into "the far country" of self-seeking and self-pleasing; we have put God aside, and not given His will and His purposes their proper place in our lives. When temptation came, as it had to come in the process of child-development, we considered self-interest and self-pleasing rather than the will and interest of God. In a word, we put life-for-self at the centre of our lives, instead of life-for-God. And that, according to Scripture, is the essence of what is called "sin." It is a wrong centralization of the life, as the result of which there has taken place what Scripture calls a "Fall"—a fall of man from God's purposes for his life. A double "fall" indeed, a fall of man out from his proper relation Godwards (described pictorially in Gen. iii.), and then as the result and outcome of that first fall, a further fall of man out from his proper relation manwards or brother-wards (described in Gen. iv. in the murder of Abel by Cain). A denial of the Fatherhood of God on the one

hand, and of the brotherhood of man on the other — from that double root has sprung and springs all the world's dispeace and confusion and strife.

III

Now, if this is the situation, and this the state of the case, as we know it each in our own experience to be, what is the remedy? What is the alone adequate and sufficient remedy? Manifestly, and in the very nature of things, nothing less than a radical central change in the life; the dethronement of self and life-for-self, which is a disintegrating and disruptive principle in every relationship—the dethronement of this from the centre and the living of the life from a new centre, what the Scriptures call "a new heart" or "a new spirit," by putting God the Father's will at the centre and submitting ourselves to His will and control. But how was such a radical central change to be brought about? How was it to be accomplished? This the Bible represents

as a problem fit for God Himself. And in the Bible, and in the Bible alone, do we find a sufficient answer to this problem and to this question. This is what makes the Bible the inspired Word of God. This is the Bible's own claim to inspiration—that through the record and interpretation of God's redemptive revelation therein contained, it is able to make men "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15).

Recall in outline the answer there given to this question, the solution provided for this problem. No sooner are we shown man's "fall" from God's purposes for his life and the consequences of that "fall," than we see, in the story, a saving redeeming intervention on God's part beginning to operate. We see Him choosing a man from a primitive Semitic people, Abram his name, moving him out from among his own people by an inward urge which he could not himself at first explain or understand. We see this man going out, "not knowing whither he went," but obedient

to the call of the Highest, till through him and his seed a new nation or people is brought into existence, the nation or people of Israel. And then in the fullness of the time, and of God's disciplinary and redemptive purposes in Israel's history, we see at length coming into human nature and into human experience One who was none other than the Eternal Son of God Himself, in this human nature and human experience and in true human terms living that wonderful life of filial fellowship with God and brotherly love to man, dying that wonderful Death, and through death and the grave attaining that wonderful Resurrection, the story of which is before us in the New Testament records.

What was the purpose of this Divine redemptive intervention in Israel's history, culminating in "the comprehensive miracle" of Christ's experience in His life and death and resurrection? According to the Scripture representation, not simply that Jesus might reveal the Father to

men through word and deed, and above all through living a true life of filial fellowship with the Father all the days of His life—not that merely, though that first, but further, that through living such a life He might mediate the true life of Sonship to men ; not simply that He might exemplify it, and through doing so reveal the Father and the Father's love, but, further, that He might, through His redeeming life and work, communicate and impart it to men. " I have come," such was Jesus' own explanation of the meaning of His life and work on earth—" I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full " (John x. 10), the true full life for man as made " in the image of God," the life of Divine sonship. And this life of Divine sonship men come to possess through believing in Jesus and submitting themselves to His Lordship and control. As He said Himself, " He who believes in the Son has life, but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life " (John iii. 36) : " As many as received him," says the

author of the Fourth Gospel, "to them gave he the right (ἐξουσίαν) to become sons (τέκνα, 'children,' R.V.) of God, even to those who believe in (εἰς, into) his name" (John i. 12)—that is to say, who surrender themselves to Him and allow Him to control their lives. Through thus receiving Christ, and through Him the right and power to become sons of God, men become born "anew" or "from above"—in the words of the writer of the same Gospel, "born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13).

In a word, let Christ into the life, place Him on the centre, make Him Lord, give Him control, and then the life becomes renewed and reconstructed from the centre outwards. The old man will be put off, the old personality, with the old impulses, inclinations, ambitions; a new man will be put on, a man who, in Paul's words, "is created after the image of God in the righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. v. 24). As Paul puts it again,

" Whenever a man comes to be in Christ, there is a new (or fresh) creation (*καινὴ κτίσις*) ; what is old is gone, the new has come " (2 Cor. v. 17). With Christ, and no longer self, at the centre there is a " re-creation " or " regeneration " of the life, a creation afresh of the whole man, which makes him, throughout the whole extent of his being, different from what he was.

Thus it is that Henry Drummond used to say to the students in Edinburgh and Glasgow : " To become a Christian is to become ec-centric," to put self off the centre and to become Christ-centred, Christo-centric. This is essential, fundamental Christianity, according to the New Testament standard—the Christ-centred, Christ-controlled life. Not first, not fundamentally, or essentially, a profession of belief in truths or doctrines even about Christ—a man may profess belief in the sense of intellectual or " notional " assent to any number of so-called " essential " truths or doctrines without his life being

thereby necessarily changed, "the devils also believe," says James (ii. 19); but a personal surrender to Christ, leading to a new way of life, a life not for self but for God and Christ and our fellow-men. "To me," says Paul, "life means no longer self, but Christ" (Phil. i. 21). "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live (it is not self that is at the centre of my life), Christ lives in me: the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in (surrender to) the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Once the life is thus centred in Christ and surrendered to Him, the disturbing or disintegrating principle is removed, and a new relationship is brought about not only with God, but with our fellow-men.

IV

It follows, then, in the very nature of the case that there is no other way to salvation, and to a new day of peace and goodwill among men, than that here

referred to. There is nothing arbitrary or accidental about the condition here laid down. As Jesus Himself said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born anew" (John iii. 7). It is of the very essential necessity of the situation: "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (ver. 3).

It is the growing perception of this that explains the very striking and significant fact that, even if it be true, as was indicated at the outset, that these words of our Lord are not so often preached upon in the pulpit of the present day as they used to be, yet the necessity here referred to is being stressed to-day as never before, even by those outside the Church. Leaders in the industrial and economic world, as well as leaders in the world of political and national and international relationships, reiterating the truth that the only hope of the coming of a new and better day, a day of "reconstruction" and of peace, lies in

the " regeneration " of the individual and social life, in a new heart and a new spirit among men and nations. Men like Roger W. Babson, the expert American statistician, saying that the need of business, the need of industry, is a new heart, a new spirit. Asking his fellow-business men this question, " When will peace and prosperity return in the business world ? " and answering his own question in this way : " They will return when wage-worker and employer change their point of view towards life and become born again, through becoming possessed by new and better motives in life, and realizing that we are here to serve rather than to be served." Men like Sir Auckland Geddes, the late British Ambassador to the United States of America, speaking in Washington in a political reference and saying : " The re-establishment of peace among the nations depends on a revival of the religion on which our Christian civilization is built." And last of all—to quote but one more testimony in this

connexion—men like the Premiers of the British Commonwealth of Nations in a New Year joint-message to the Empire, saying that "the hope of the coming of a spirit of peace and goodwill among men and nations rests upon spiritual forces, and primarily on a new recognition of the fundamental spiritual fact of the Fatherhood of God."

This is why the Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God is the sole hope of the world, in the words of Sir Douglas (now Earl) Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in the recent Great War, "the world's only hope and the sole promise of the world's peace." This is why the Christian minister, put in trust with the proclamation of this Gospel, has been truly described as "the inner statesman of the new world." And this, too, is why we can all best help forward the coming of "the Kingdom of God"—which is the scriptural way of describing the new era to be ushered in by the bringing of life in all its relationships under

the control of the twin constraints of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—by crowning Christ as Lord and King in our lives, and living not unto ourselves but unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. That through all the world's unrest and confusion and strife the Kingdom of God will come—this is the greatest certainty of God's universe, more sure than any so-called scientific certainty, because, as we have seen, all else exists for this. And the crowning wonder of the grace of God to us in Christ, as Paul perceived, is that we are called, each of us in our several places and relations, to have a part with Him and through Him in bringing about the fulfilment of a Heavenly Father's purposes for the world. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

"God is working His purpose out
As year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out,
And the time is drawing near;

Nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea."

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